

# GREAT POWERS AND THE PATTERNS OF INTERNAL WAR

*INTERESTS, IDEOLOGY & SOVEREIGNTY*

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# Abstract

This theory explains why the patterns and character of civil war have systematically changed over the past two hundred years. Most scholarship on civil war focuses on domestic or regional factors: regime type, economic distribution, lootable resources, ethno-religious hatreds, bad neighbors, and terrain favoring insurgency, among many others. However, international politics has a major and understudied role to play in civil war incidence and intensity. This study uses structural realism to explain how the shifting balance of power leads to the changing character of civil war. Data from all civil wars from 1816 through 2010 are grouped by period – multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity – and compared across a wide array of variables: onset, duration, battle deaths, intervention, intervention type, termination, termination type, ideology, imperialism, and new “weak” states. The hypotheses are tested with both statistical analysis and case studies, and the findings give strong support to the theory’s expectations.

Great power interests, internal faction interests, transnational ideology, and new state creation are four main factors that link international politics to civil war, but the effects of each factor are different as the balance of power changes. Multipolarity produces the most conservative character of civil war—the shortest and least bloody. Bipolarity is abnormally intense—the longest durations and most bloody, and the biggest role for ideology and intervention. Unipolarity produces civil wars of neither extreme, but does allow for more conflicts to be terminated through negotiation than military victory. These findings have implications for scholarship and policy. For example, most civil war scholarship groups Cold War and post-Cold War data together, biasing prescriptions for present civil wars, because the majority of their data comes from the historically abnormal Cold War period. This study argues that lessons learned about civil war in one period of history may not be applicable to civil



war in subsequent periods. One cannot understand the character and patterns of civil war without understanding the international structure within which they occur.

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# Introduction

## CHAPTER ONE

*“War is conceded to be the greatest of all evils by as much as peace is the greatest of all blessings. Yet stasis as far exceeds war in the magnitude of its evil as war exceeds peace.”*  
—Larisaean pamphleteer, ca. 404 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past two hundred years, civil war has become more common than all other forms of conflict. Civil wars and other low-intensity internal wars made up about 50% of all ongoing conflicts between the Napoleonic Wars and World War II. During the Cold War, that figure rose to about 70%. But since the end of the Cold War, internal wars now make up about 90% of all ongoing conflicts,<sup>2</sup> and 90% of civilian and combatant deaths have been the consequence of internal wars.<sup>3</sup> And over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> C., more people were killed by their own governments than all other wars combined.<sup>4</sup>

While international relations scholars rightly study the problem of great power war and the potential for a nuclear exchange, the very real and present security threats posed by civil

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Manicas (1982), p. 688. In Ancient Greek thought, *stasis* could refer to a range of civil dissolution, including factionalism, sedition, and civil war. See also, Plato *Laws* I.628.a.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated using Kristian Gleditsch’s “Expanded War Data” Version 2.0, updated 5 November 2013; based on Gleditsch (2004). The percentage figure includes both regular civil wars, and “non-state” wars, which are wars within a territory between two factions neither of which is a state.

<sup>3</sup> Lacina (2006), p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> Mueller (2004), p. 118.

wars are passed over when constructing theories of international politics and security. Major wars, since they have so many deaths and so many political ramifications, are used as the traditional markers separating eras of the international system. The Napoleonic Wars, World War I, and World War II were transformative events for world history. Comparatively, civil wars receive far less attention in theories of international relations, which makes sense on the surface of things—after all, wars are fought internationally, while civil wars are fought domestically. As such, the study of internal war has been dominated by the field of comparative politics. But this should not remain the case; civil wars have been just as important to international politics as interstate wars, playing their own part in defining the epochs of international history, often by setting the stage for major international conflicts. For example:

- The Wars of Religion throughout Europe heralded the breakdown of the medieval synthesis and the beginning of the emergence of the modern state. Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes gave legitimacy and justification for sovereignty based on their experiences with the French Wars of Religion and the English civil war.
- The 1648 Peace of Westphalia – popularly held to be the turning point when the sovereign state overtook its political rivals – marked the end of the Thirty Years War, a massive internationalized civil war that began in Germany, drew in multiple great powers, and led to the death of over 30% of Central Europe.
- The American Revolution not only signaled the rise of liberalism and democracy, but also served as inspiration to revolutionaries in France and to anti-colonial nationalists who would go on to decolonize the New World.



- The Napoleonic Wars had their roots in the French Revolution and the emergence of zealous republicanism and nationalism that spread across Europe. The Concert of Europe was explicitly formulated by Count Metternich to prevent great power conflicts that might again unleash revolutionary upheavals that would threaten dynastic legitimacy.
- Serbian nationalism and the threat of ethnic upheaval tearing apart the Austro-Hungarian Empire served as the impetus for World War I. The 1917 October Revolution, 1920–1922 civil war in Russia, and the 1918–1919 November Revolution in Germany set the stage for the Bolshevik and Nazi destruction of interwar order and collapse into World War II.
- Civil wars likewise helped define and create the Cold War, by giving reality to the threat of global revolutionary subversion. Without the Chinese, Greek, and Korean civil wars there would be no Truman Doctrine or NSC-68. And just as civil wars began the Cold War, it was a wave of revolutions – this time in Eastern Europe – that led to the “Sinatra Doctrine” and the end of the Cold War.

If one wants to understand the defining eras of international relations—the emergence of the sovereign states-system, the golden age of the balance of power, the Concert of Europe, the Napoleonic Wars, the two World Wars, the Cold War, and the character of the present—one cannot do so without an understanding of the international politics of civil war. Great powers have historically paid close attention to internal wars or the threat of them, because they have rightly realized the epochal consequences that they can have for world politics. Today, we see the post-Cold War era as have been defined by “the coming anarchy” or by being “out of

control,” with seemingly irresolvable ethno-religious conflicts (perhaps a “clash of civilizations”) and transnational terrorism emanating from weak or failed states across the globe.<sup>5</sup> Yet international relations scholars have not produced a rigorous or systematic theory of the international politics of internal war.

The theory and hypotheses advanced by this dissertation were first conceived in Spring 2008. The civil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were still ongoing, albeit at a lower intensity than they were four or five years earlier. Over the next few years, the ‘Color Revolutions’ in the post-Soviet space inspired a number of subsequent domestic upheavals around the world to take on color names.<sup>6</sup> The Arab Spring began in 2010 as a shocking wave of protests against authoritarian regimes, spreading through media, demonstration, and spillover across North Africa, Arabia, Gulf, and Levant. This revolutionary wave was compared initially to the 1989 “Autumn of Nations” Revolutions in Eastern Europe, but as the revolutions began to fail they were likened instead to the 1848 “Spring of Nations” Revolutions.

The ongoing Syrian civil war emerged from the Arab Spring in 2011, while the current Ukrainian civil war was sparked by a 2014 replay of the 2004 Orange Revolution. The Syrian civil war has thus far resulted in 200,000–300,000 deaths in its first four years, and seen the emergence of a horrifying transnational Islamic insurgency aiming to restore a Caliphate to the Middle East. The annexation of Crimea and Russian-sponsored rebellion in the Donbass has led to over 6000 deaths in its first year, but even more ominously the possibility of a proxy war between Russia and NATO. These two conflicts have thrust the problem of internal war into the public eye, and given the study of the international politics of civil war a pressing urgency.

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<sup>5</sup> Brzezinski (1993), Kagan (1994), Huntington (1996).

<sup>6</sup> They include the 2009 Grape Revolution, 2009 Green Revolution, 2011 Lotus Revolution, and two different 2011 Jasmine Revolutions among others.

Far from being relieved of the problem of global civil war once the Cold War ended, the devastating effects of civil war remain with us, and the possibility of civil wars drawing in external powers is a very real threat today. We need a more rigorous understanding of the place of internal war in international politics. Unfortunately, it is not clear that the lessons we learned about internal war during the Cold War are still applicable to the internal wars being fought today. This seems intuitive: revolutionary wars fought during an ideological superpower contest would play out in a very different security environment than civil wars being fought following the end of the ideological clash and the collapse of one of the two superpowers. But the majority of internal war scholars argue that in most aspects civil wars did *not* undergo a major change in the post-Cold War era.<sup>7</sup>

The central question that this dissertation addresses is whether or not major changes in international politics result in different internal wars. Does international politics have a decisive impact on domestic conflicts? Why and how would international politics affect the character of internal war? And, what kinds of changes to international politics will also then alter the course and patterns of internal war? In order to understand how to navigate the civil wars we currently face, we need to know whether the lessons we learned in the past are applicable to our present engagements with internal conflict. What insights can we gain about civil wars over the past twenty-five years, compared to those that came before?

I will both advance and test a new theory describing how international politics affects the character and patterns of internal war over the past two hundred years. First, I will advance a theory explaining how we expect international politics to shape internal war. The theoretical

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<sup>7</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), pp. 417–418.

starting point will be the balance of power in the international system as it is described by structural realism. The theory can then be used to explain how different distributions of power ought to affect the security interests, political ideologies, and sovereignty of the factions fighting a civil war and the great powers weighing an intervention. Second, I will test these expectations – both the mechanisms linking great powers and internal factions, and the resulting character and patterns of internal war – using in-depth case studies and a dataset of all the internal wars over the past two hundred years. The combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence, it is hoped, will demonstrate that the theory advanced here is a rigorous and useful explanation for the broad patterns in the character and incidence of internal war. Not only can we then gain insight into present conflicts, but also discern what to expect from future civil wars if we return to a multipolar or bipolar system once again.

## Studies of Internal War

The study of internal war as we know it was born of the Cold War. Before the post-World War II period of “global civil war,”<sup>8</sup> scholars focused not on ‘civil war’ as a phenomenon or area of study unto itself, but principally on ‘revolution.’ Harry Eckstein’s 1965 “On the Etiology of Internal Wars,” noted that ‘internal war’ was not a new concept – *guerre intérieure* was used in the late 18<sup>th</sup> C. and during the 19<sup>th</sup> C. by writers on political violence.<sup>9</sup> However, the dominant concept among scholars and historians was not ‘civil war’ or ‘internal war,’ but a host of related phenomena. Eckstein lists guerilla warfare, war of independence, terrorism, insurrection, *coup d’état*, governmental *coup*, revolutionary *coup*, reform *coup*, *Putsch*,

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<sup>8</sup> Schmitt (2007c). Westad (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Eckstein lists: historian Jean Charles de Sismondi writing on French history during the French Revolution, the letters of Count Axel von Fersen, Publius’ 1787–1788 *Federalist Papers*, and Pierre Kropotkin’s 1885 *Paroles d’un Révolté*. Eckstein (1965), p.133n2.

revolution, palace revolution, political revolution, social revolution, rebellion, “primitive” rebellion, uprising, riot, *pronunciamento*, and so on. The attention of most pre-WWII scholarship was paid to comparative studies of the “Great Revolutions” of world history, which did not give much insight into the broader problems of internal war that demanded attention during the Cold War (nor, Eckstein notes, did the Great Revolutions give much insight into the lesser civil wars of their own time periods). “Civil war” was not the object of comparative study; rather it was typically employed when discussing the history of a single civil war, for example the American Civil War.<sup>10</sup>

The Greek, Chinese, and Korean civil wars made internal war and subversion a central concern for global security, manifesting in the Truman Doctrine and NSC-68, while decolonization forced scholars and politicians to grapple with wars of national liberation.<sup>11</sup> The Cold War scholarship was divided by Western and Soviet approaches to the study of civil war, especially revolutionary civil wars. American scholars took two competing approaches to the study of Third World instability. The first came out of political economy, development, and economics, defined initially by Walt Rostow’s modernization theory. Later James Davies and Ted Gurr moved the focus toward poverty and relative deprivation as the leading explanations for civil wars.<sup>12</sup> The second American approach was politico-military and was driven more by the practical questions resulting from American involvement in Cold War civil wars, especially in Indochina. The Marxist approach also had multiple competing strains: Marx and Engels’ theory of class warfare and Marx’s interpretation of the Paris Commune, Lenin’s theory of

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<sup>10</sup> Eckstein (1965).

<sup>11</sup> Zartman (2010), p. 299.

<sup>12</sup> Zartman (2010), p. 299. Odom (1992), Chapter 2.

revolution influenced by his reading of Clausewitz, Trotsky's 'permanent revolution,' Mao's Third World people's war, and the *dependista* and World-System scholarship developed in part as a rejoinder to modernization theory.<sup>13</sup>

Following the end of the Cold War, comparative politics and international relations refocused on the problem of internal war, because there was a perceived explosion in ethnic wars, 'new wars,' and predatory wars around the world.<sup>14</sup> The field of comparative politics has produced the most scholarship on internal war, employing economic explanations and econometric or rational choice methods.<sup>15</sup> There has also been the rational choice approach to political grievances and how they are operationalized through institutions, oppression, ideology, informational processes, recruitment, opportunity costs, and expected utility.<sup>16</sup> Politico-military studies and policy analyses remained, but were reduced in prominence until the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> thrust the problems of weak or failed states, terrorism, insurgency, nation-building and peace-building back into the mainstream.

The contemporary scholarship on internal war is vast and it would be vain to attempt to categorize and summarize even the last 25 years of post-Cold War studies, much less the entirety of the literature. I will discuss the broad schools of thought on internal war, and a few subgroupings that will make clear where this dissertation will contribute. Overall, there are two camps working on the problems of internal war:

- Rationalists using primarily econometric methods and focusing on *apolitical* correlates of internal war and its characteristics; and,

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<sup>13</sup> Odom (1992), Chapter 2. Zartman (2010), p. 299.

<sup>14</sup> Lacina (2004). Zartman (2010), pp. 299–300.

<sup>15</sup> Zartman (2010), p. 300. Sambanis (2002), pp. 220–221.

<sup>16</sup> Sambanis (2002), p. 224.

- Diverse approaches from scholars using mixed methods to focus on the *political* causes of internal war and its various facets.

These are broad and heterogeneous groups with many significant internal disagreements. However, this division accurately represents the important position that rationalist comparativists occupy in the study of internal war, having set the terms of the debate for the post-Cold War era. The other camp, focusing on political causes, was dominant during the Cold War but no longer. Scholars from across disciplines are represented – comparativists, international relations theorists, and sociologists among others – using statistical, case study, or mixed methods. Both groups share similar topics of study – onset, duration, battle deaths, intervention, and termination – but sharply contest which causal factors are significant and what effects they have on internal war.

There have been several review articles published on the waves of quantitative research produced since the end of the Cold War, and some specifically on the “greed and grievance” debate.<sup>17</sup> Discussions of the literature from a political or international relations approach have been rarer.<sup>18</sup> For the most part, there is not a direct clash between scholars on methodological issues,<sup>19</sup> although one should note that Nicholas Sambanis advocated the use of case studies to scholars otherwise using predominantly quantitative methods.<sup>20</sup>

What follows will be a review of the apolitical rationalist scholarship, followed by three different subgroups of the politics-focused scholarship: those focused on domestic politics;

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<sup>17</sup> Overviews of quantitative studies include: Licklider (1998), Sambanis (2002), Hegre & Sambanis (2006), Dixon (2009), Bleaney & Dimico (2009), and Florea (2012). For summaries of the “greed and grievance” debate specifically, see: Ron (2005), and Bodea and Elbadawi (2007).

<sup>18</sup> David (1997), and Lake (2003).

<sup>19</sup> Some exceptions, criticizing Collier & Hoeffler principally, include: Nathan (2005), and Zartman (2011).

<sup>20</sup> Sambanis (2004).

those focused on regional, transnational, or Cold War foreign policy; and finally, those that put forward systemic explanations for changes to the character and patterns of internal war.

### *THE APOLITICAL APPROACH*

It makes sense in retrospect that the rise of the apolitical, econometric ‘feasibility’ or ‘greed’ position coincided with the end of the global ideological Cold War and the perceived victory of neoliberalism.<sup>21</sup> The assumptions underlying this scholarship are borrowed from the econometric methods used: actors are cost-benefit calculating individuals that are responsive to the incentives they face in pursuing their material/physical interests. By studying the environment that people in different societies face, one can discern which factors make one society rather than another more prone to internal conflict. This approach also enables scholars to avoid having to test more metaphysical concepts such as ethnicity, religion, or ideology. The central claims made by this school of thought are: first, that studies focused on political grievances have underplayed the role of predatory motivations (“greed”) in the incidence of internal war; and second, that political grievances exist in every society but we do not see civil war everywhere, therefore what is most important to look for are the resources and incentives that make setting off and sustaining a civil war feasible.

These scholars take evidence from preexisting datasets or construct new datasets to remedy flaws in older datasets or to rigorously present a previously understudied variable.

There are a large number of projects, institutions, and scholars who have constructed internal

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<sup>21</sup> Gorbachev declared a ‘new world order’ in a speech to the UN on 7 December 1988, in which he envisioned the decline of ideology in determining relations between states. Bush Sr. gave his “Towards a New World Order” speech to a joint session of Congress on 11 September 1990 in which likewise envisioned that future cleavages would be economic (North-South) rather than ideological (East-West). Also on the post-Cold War decline of ideological conflict, see Fukuyama (1989). On liberalism and depoliticization, see Schmitt (2007a).



war datasets available for experiment or replication.<sup>22</sup> One of the main problems with the datasets – which the studies based on them inherit – is that few have data going back before World War II. As such, the patterns and correlations they produce are heavily influenced by Cold War observations, while post-Cold War internal wars make up a smaller portion of their data. This is acceptable if one assumes that civil wars are driven almost entirely by internal factors. But if civil war varies by time period, the findings from these studies may be misleading when applied to present conflicts, given their heavy bias toward Cold War data. However, datasets that go back to the 1800s – Correlates of War and Gleditsch’s revision to COW – do not offer as many testable variables per country, year, or conflict. The data available for post-WWII conflicts is usually higher quality, more accurate, more comprehensive, covers more aspects of the conflicts, and is constructed in a way that makes inferential statistical tests easy to perform. One final issue is the appropriateness of applying parametric inferential statistics to internal war data. Most studies discuss the appropriateness of which particular test they are applying, but few engage the question of whether internal war data sufficiently meets all or most of the assumptions necessary to produce valid results (discussed in greater detail in the methodology section below).

The main proponents of the feasibility hypothesis have been Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, James Fearon, and David Laitin. Collier & Hoeffler first framed the debate between “greed and grievance,” arguing that greed was the more important area of study when seeking to

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<sup>22</sup> These include: the Correlates of War, UCDP/PRIO, CSCW/PRIO, Minorities at Risk, Center for Systemic Peace, Political Instability Task Force, SIPRI, SHERFACS, Human Security Report Project, International Peace Research Institute, Post-Internal War Accommodation and Repression Data Project, Domestic Strife and the Initiation of Violence at Home and Abroad, Statistics of Democide, the *Journal of Peace Research*’s replication data archive, Anke Hoeffler, Fearon & Laitin, Nicholas Sambanis, Kristian Gleditsch, Patrick Regan, and Sandra Halperin among many others. Additionally, APSA’s Task Force on Political Violence and Terrorism created a bibliography with relevant datasets: <http://www.apsanet.org/politicalviolence>.

understand the incidence of internal war.<sup>23</sup> Fearon & Laitin contributed substantial works to the argument against political grievances, gathering further evidence that it is conditions favoring insurgency that best explain internal war incidence.<sup>24</sup> Another significant contributor to this literature has been Michael Ross who focused in on whether specific natural resources affect incidence.<sup>25</sup> Their work has inspired a large number of other scholars to test apolitical correlates of civil war incidence and intensity, proposing a cavalcade of variables that correlate with internal war onset, duration, termination, recidivism, battle deaths, and intervention.<sup>26</sup>

Grouping these scholars together should not overstate the degree of agreement between them; they maintain sharp and evolving disputes over key models and variables. But they have done important work in pushing long understudied economic and geographic factors to the forefront of internal war research, and created a broad and productive research programme. Nevertheless, this school of thought remains constrained by the limitations of their datasets, measurement indicators, and the robustness of their statistical tests in producing valid results.

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<sup>23</sup> Collier & Hoeffler's core works on the economic theory of civil war are: Collier & Hoeffler (1998), Collier & Hoeffler (1999), Collier & Hoeffler (2001), Collier & Hoeffler (2004a), and Collier & Hoeffler (2009).

<sup>24</sup> Fearon & Laitin (2003), Fearon (2004), and Fearon (2005).

<sup>25</sup> See Ross (2003), Ross (2004a), Ross (2004b), and Ross (2006). Other scholars testing natural resources and onset – both supporting and refuting – include: Klare (2001), Soysa (2002), Ballentine & Sherman (2003), Auty (2004), Humphreys (2005), Buhaug (2005), Buhaug & Lujala (2005), Soysa & Neumayer (2007), Brunnschweiler & Bulte (2009), Lujala (2009), Buhaug, Gates & Lujala (2009), Thies (2010).

<sup>26</sup> For examples in addition to works already cited above, see: Collier & Hoeffler (2004b), Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom (2004), Berdol & Malone (2000), Ross (2004), de Rouen & Sobek (2004), Sobek & Boehmer (2007), Besley & Persson (2008), Buhaug & Gates (2002), Buhaug, Gates & Lujala (2009), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), and Sambanis (2000). For a broader overview, see Hegre (2004). Håvard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis (2006) provided a sensitivity test of eighty-eight different variables – both feasibility and political variables – employed across large cross-section of the quantitative literature.

Apolitical or economic correlates of onset or duration tested by scholars in this camp are: primary commodity exports, oil exports, lootable gems or gold, secondary diamonds, drug trade, the location of gemstones and oil relative to the conflict zone, opportunity costs faced by young men, proportion of young men, overall size of the population, large diasporas, dispersal of population, the distance of rebels from the government, location of insurgency near a remote international border, mountainous terrain, forested terrain, rough terrain, non-contiguous territory, per capita income, economic growth, trade policy, the price of oil or minerals, agricultural prices, international market prices, 'new states' in their first two years of independence, food supply, rainfall declines, land degradation, global warming's effect on Africa, and simply being located in Africa.

Finally, the self-imposed constraint of looking at feasibility rather than at political grievances was important to create this research programme, but also limits their explanatory power especially at a macro or world-historical level.

### *THE POLITICAL APPROACH*

Political explanations for the character of internal war have been advanced by a wide variety of scholars from different disciplines employing varying methodological approaches. These studies were predominant before the end of the Cold War, when intense ideological cleavages focused scholarly attention on the civil wars created first by liberalism and republicanism and later by Marxism. Because the scholars' disciplines and methods are mixed, the political grievance approach will instead be discussed according to the "level" of politics being examined.<sup>27</sup> First, domestic political issues, including: ethno-religious conflict; regime types, transitions, and weakness; and, ideology. Second, foreign policies and transnational effects, including: most studies of intervention, especially those written during the Cold War; transnational diaspora influence; and, bad neighbor, spillover, and regional effects. Third, the political structures of the international system: whether changes to the balance of power had an effect on the patterns of internal war.

#### **Studies of Domestic Politics**

Studies of ethnic conflict are a major portion the internal war scholarship produced since the end of the Cold War. Following the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, religious conflict has also returned to the center of studies probing identity politics and civil war. Scholars proposing

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<sup>27</sup> In Waltz's schema, domestic politics falls in the 2<sup>nd</sup> image, foreign policy models would also fall under what Waltz terms "reductionist" theories (because they typically assert a linear causal relationship between the internally-generated priorities of the intervening state and the behavioral outcomes, without taking into account strategic or interaction affects as they drive transnational, regional, or international actors), while the systemic theories would be 3<sup>rd</sup> image. Waltz (2001) and Waltz (1979), Chapters 2–4.

and rebutting ethnic causes have disagreements with each other that are just as sharp as the disagreements among scholars advocating the feasibility approach. The debate is more charged because, unlike the apolitical correlates found by the feasibility school, the implications of demonstrating that ethno-political divisions are a potential source of conflict can be dangerous. Mixed methods are used to study ethnic and religious wars, both statistical tests of certain indices, and case studies of specific ethnic conflicts.<sup>28</sup> Difficulties arise in the assumptions necessary to operationalize or speak about ethnicity without descending into primordialism—to what extent is ethnicity real or politicized, mutable or ascriptive, and when and how does ethnicity go from intermixing and intermarriage to segregated and violent?<sup>29</sup> One significant methodological problem with this literature is that of selection: countries that have experienced civil war are examined for the role of ethnicity, but ethnically polarized or fragmented societies that have not experienced civil war are not consistently included in analyses (whether using quantitative methods or case studies).

A substantial portion of the debate over ethnic war concerns whether or in what ways ethnicity plays a role in the onset of civil conflict. As Sambanis notes in his overview of internal war literature, a central point of the feasibility school has been that ethno-linguistic fragmentation – *elf* – was not linked to a higher risk of civil war.<sup>30</sup> While straightforward ethnic diversity may not lead to conflict, various forms of ethnic polarization or domination do

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<sup>28</sup> For case studies and theoretical examinations of ethnic war, see for example: Midlarsky (1992), Brown (1993), Guff & Harff (1994), Ryan (1995), Lobell & Mauceri (2004).

<sup>29</sup> For arguments against ‘ethnic war’ as a properly specified concept, see Mueller (2000), and Gilley (2004). On the mutability of ethnic identities within civil war, see Kalyvas (2008). On ethnicity and the emergence of a security dilemma, see Posen (1993).

<sup>30</sup> Sambanis (2002). This includes the work of key authors cited in the previous section – Collier & Hoeffler (2004), and Fearon & Laitin (2003) among many others. Arguing against this position directly is Blimes (2006), whose tests indicate that ethno-linguistic fractionalization has an *indirect* effect on onsets.

seem to have a significant correlation with internal war onset. Minority institutional exclusion, repression, deprivation, inequality, loss of autonomy, demographic stress, sharp cultural distance, territorial concentration, and ability to mobilize have all been put forward as significant causal factors.<sup>31</sup> Conversely, majority ethnicity concentration and ethnic minority rule have also been studied as factors that prompt state collapse or insurgency.<sup>32</sup> A special focus on religion, either as a component of ethnicity or as an identity differentiable from ethnicity, has been brought back as an important topic of study following 9/11. Several analyses have found that religious difference is a better predictor of state collapse and internal war than ethno-linguistic cleavages.<sup>33</sup> Finally, scholars have examined whether ethnic civil wars are qualitatively different with respect to duration, intervention, battle deaths, and settlement possibilities. One of the sharpest debates in this area is whether partition of warring ethnic groups is the best solution to prevent recidivism.<sup>34</sup>

Regime types, transitions between regime types, and state weakness are the second major grouping of studies that focus on domestic political factors. The two major debates within this research area are whether or not democracy is an effective solution to the problem of civil war, and whether the states of the Third World, especially post-colonial or newly created states, are qualitatively different or especially prone to internal war. If civil wars are the result of

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<sup>31</sup> See Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), Gurr (1993), Laitin (2004), Besançon (2005), Buhaug (2006), Cederman & Girardin (2007), Beger & Moore (2008), Bhavani & Miodownik (2009), Wimmer, Cederman & Min (2009), Cederman, Weidmann & Gleditsch (2011), and Cederman, Gleditsch & Hug (2012).

<sup>32</sup> See Hale (2004), and Fearon, Kimulikasara & Laitin (2007).

<sup>33</sup> For example, Reynal-Querol (2002), Toft (2007), Fox (2007), Fish, Jensenius & Michel (2010), Selway (2011), and de Juan (2014). De Soysa (2002) finds both Islam and Catholicism significant. Arguing for linguistic rather than religious cleavages as causal, see Bormann, Cederman & Vogt (2013).

<sup>34</sup> On intervention, see Kauffman (1996)—international intervention and transnational influences are dealt with in more detail in the section below. On duration, battle deaths, and settlement, see Licklider (1998), Mishali-Ram (2006), Montalvo & Reynal-Querol (2007), Bercovitch & de Rouen (2007), Svensson (2007), Dixon (2009), and Wucherpfennig *et al.* (2012). On the partition debate, see Kauffman (1996), Kauffman (1999), Sambanis (2000), and Walter (2004).

political contestation intensifying beyond the pale, then the institutions of the state for facilitating compromise and conflict resolution ought to make a difference in the propensity toward violent breakdowns. Further, if state capacity is too weak to maintain a monopoly of *legitimate* use of force, the weakness of the state may open windows of opportunity for rebels, or allow low levels of violence to snowball into wholesale civil dissolution.<sup>35</sup> The scholars studying the role of regime type and weak states use a variety of methods, some quantitative, others case studies. One ongoing difficulty with this literature is the problem of measuring or categorizing ‘democracy’ and ‘state capacity.’<sup>36</sup> Case studies can make more sophisticated subjective judgments about a country’s democratic institutions or the strength of state–society relations, but it is difficult to then generalize from the nuances of the case across other societies that have their own nuances and culturally contingent factors.

A central debate among comparativists and liberal international relations scholars is the extent to which democracy inhibits the onset of civil war. There appears to be strong correlative support for democracy and political participation as factors inhibiting a breakdown into civil conflict.<sup>37</sup> A number of scholars dispute the significance of democracy, but instead argue that it is countries that are in-between democracy and authoritarianism (i.e. ‘anocracy’),

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<sup>35</sup> Mueller (2004).

<sup>36</sup> To what extent can numerical indices like those produced by Polity and Freedom House escape arbitrariness and bias from their coders and from their system for compiling component scores into a final numerical score? Even categorical coding – e.g. democracy, anocracy, or authoritarian – has difficulties determining a bright-line cutoff between democracy and other regime types. And, to what extent do common proxies for state capacity – e.g. per capita income, GDP per capita, tax collection, government spending, natural resource rents, regime type, bureaucracy – actually reflect a state’s ability to deter or coerce its citizens?

<sup>37</sup> Krain & Myers (1997), Hegre *et al.* (2001), Reynal-Querol (2002), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2002), Regan & Norton (2005), Marshall & Cole (2009), Gleditsch & Ruggeri (2010). Both Brückner & Ciccone (2007) and Bodea & Elbadawi (2007) find a bridge between the economic and regime explanations, showing that slow GDP growth is only causal in non-democracies, but is not longer a risk factor when examining only democracies. However, Miguel, Satyanath & Segenti (2004) find that democracies are just as prone as nondemocracies to civil conflict resulting from negative income economic shocks.

are in transition between the two, or are new and not yet established democracies that appear to have the highest probability of descent into internal war.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, democracies have been found to have fewer battle deaths, lesser chance of committing genocide, better chance at negotiated settlement, and lesser chance of resuming a civil war.<sup>39</sup>

Alongside democracy, another focus of study has been whether newly created or post-colonial states (especially those located in Africa) are significantly more susceptible to civil war. The basic argument is that newly created states often do not have the time to consolidate state capacity or a monopoly on force before succumbing to internal factionalism and violence. Additionally, because of the lack of interstate war in many regions, states do not face competitive pressure to increase their capacity, military effectiveness, and extractive abilities—whereas states in Europe and East Asia were born in environments of constant threat of interstate war.<sup>40</sup> While the logic makes intuitive sense, the empirical record returns mixed results and confusion about what constitutes a weak state and whether certain characteristics are even unique to so-called weak states.<sup>41</sup> States that lost superpower support with the end of

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<sup>38</sup> Gurr (1994), Collier & Hoeffler (1999), Fearon & Laitin (2003), Walter (2004), Lacina (2004), Goldstone *et al.* (2005), Hegre & Sambanis (2006), Busmann & Schneider (2007), Cederman, Hug & Krebs (2010), Gurses & Mason (2010), Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), Cederman, Gleditsch & Hug (2012). Arguing against the link between anocracy and civil war is Vreeland (2008), who notes that the Polity index of political regime includes a measure of factional political violence, making the correlation more accurately between factional political violence and civil war. Buhaug (2005) and Buhaug (2006) find that anocracies are prone to revolutionary war for governmental control, while democracies are actually more prone to secessionist conflicts.

<sup>39</sup> On battle deaths, see Lacina (2006), Melander, Öberg & Hall (2009). On settlements and recidivism, see Walter (2002), Pearson *et al.* (2006), Gurses, Rost & McLeod (2008).

<sup>40</sup> Desch (1996).

<sup>41</sup> Arguing for weakness as a causal factor for onset, see Lacina (2004), Human Security Report (2005), Humphreys (2005), Buhaug (2005), Buhaug (2006), Gurses and Mason (2010), Kalyvas & Balcells (2007), Peic & Reiter (2011). For duration, termination, and recidivism, see de Rouen & Sobek (2004), de Rouen & Bercovitch (2008), Gent (2008). On battle deaths, see Lacina (2006). Arguing that the 'weak state' research project is misguided and unproductive, see Patrick (2006), Halvorson (2010), Mazarr (2014).

the Cold War – one indicator of weakness – were more prone to civil war.<sup>42</sup> States in their first few years of independence – ‘new’ typically defined as the first two years – have also been found to be more prone to internal war.<sup>43</sup> And, states with weak capacity are typically unable to deal with the kind of economic or environmental shocks that lead to civil conflict.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, the third group of studies focusing on domestic political factors examines the role of ideology. However, since the end of the Cold War, ideology has almost completely faded from the research agenda of scholars studying internal war—although it may be helpful in understand past civil wars, it is not assumed to aid in understanding present day civil wars, with the exception of political Islam. Nevertheless, a few scholars have probed ideology’s aggravating effect on battle deaths, intervention, and termination.<sup>45</sup>

### **Studies of Foreign Policy**

Arguments that involve external actors directly influencing an internal war can be divided into two groups: transnational and regional interactions; and, international interventions. Rather than focusing on the solely domestic causal factors (whether apolitical feasibility or political grievance), scholars focusing on this research area look to external or international causes to explain the character of internal wars. I categorize this area of study as distinct from systemic theories, because they look at regional transnational interactions rather

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<sup>42</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010).

<sup>43</sup> Hegre *et al.* (2001), Fearon & Laitin (2003), Hironaka (2005), Gleditsch (2007). Young (2012) argues that among weak states only those that engage in repression are prone to civil war.

<sup>44</sup> There is a great deal of overlap on this issue with the ‘feasibility’ school of thought: Fearon & Laitin (2003), Fearon (2005), Humphreys (2005), de Soysa & Neumayer (2007), Thies (2010), Hendrix (2011). Against the feasibility school, other scholars point to political grievances and pre-existing levels of conflict: Lichbach, Davenport & Armstrong II (2003), and Davenport, Armstrong II & Lichbach (2005).

<sup>45</sup> Pearson (1974), Pearson & Baumann (1974), Schultz & Slater (1990), Sambanis (2000), Thaler (2012). On Islamism as an ideology, see Doran (2002), Highland (2003), Russell (2005), Geisler (2007), Lee (2008), Jones & Smith (2010), and Newmann (2011).



than global, and because they argue for the domestic characteristics of states undergoing internal war as the key determinants of superpowers intervention.

Transnational or regional theories seek to test the intentional or unintentional effects of external actors, often short of an outright intervention. They examine diaspora groups, criminal or terrorist networks, “bad” neighbors, “contagion,” or spillover. They aim to show that the intentional actions of non-state groups can have a decisive impact on the onset or duration of an internal war, and that the unintended effects of nearby states can also prompt or lengthen an internal war. Most of the studies in this area are undertaken with quantitative methods (although not all), whereas studies of intervention are far more mixed in their methods. Because of the focus on diaspora influence, there is significant overlap with the literature on ethnic war.

Kristian Gleditsch asserts that, “it is inappropriate to treat civil war as a fully domestic phenomenon.”<sup>46</sup> A state does not exist in isolation, but is integrated to varying degrees with its neighbors and region. Ethnic, political, and economic transnational links between states can play a role in destabilizing a country such that a civil war erupts or an ongoing civil war’s duration is extended. Scholars have pointed to ethnic groups divided by a state border and neighboring countries undergoing civil wars of their own (including total state failure) as increasing the probability that a state will suffer its own internal war—conflict is “contagious” or prone to spillover or creates a demonstration effect. Cross border movements of co-ethnics and refugees may spread arms, combatants, and ideologies that exacerbate instability. On the other hand, the more neighbors that are democracies and the greater the amount of

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<sup>46</sup> Gleditsch (2007), p. 294.

interregional trade, the lesser the probability of civil war outbreak.<sup>47</sup> Regional effects may explain why civil wars cluster in space and time better than explanations that point to a region's culture or states (e.g. simply being located in Africa).<sup>48</sup>

The second group of studies at the foreign policy level are those investigating intervention. Theories or models of intervention were a major focus of scholars' attention during the Cold War, given the pressing problem of revolution and counterrevolution sponsored and by the two superpowers. The underlying premise of this area of research is that it is not just intervention that changes the character and outcome of internal wars, but also that the ever-present threat or possibility of intervention can by itself alter the onset and course of internal wars. With the end of the Cold War, there was a methodological shift—where the study of intervention had largely been theory-building, case studies, or policy analyses, subsequently quantitative methods began to make up the greater portion of the literature following the Cold War. New methods and approaches aided in understanding the emergence of new types of intervention. Because intervening, especially from outside a civil war's immediate region, is an inherently political decision, the feasibility school's apolitical correlates

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<sup>47</sup> Deutsch (1964), Rosenau (1964), Eley (1972), Gurr (1993), Regan (1998), Sambanis (2001), Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom (2001), Addison & Murshed (2002), Fearon & Laitin (2003), Collier & Hoeffler (2004), Fearon (2004), Sambanis (2004), Nathan (2005), Buhaug (2005), Austvoll (2005), O'Loughlin & Witmer (2005), Hegre & Sambanis (2006), Salehyan & Gleditsch (2006), Gleditsch (2007), Bussmann & Schneider (2007), Buhaug (2008), Iqbal & Starr (2008), Salehyan (2009), Buhaug, Gates & Lujala (2009), Geography, Rebel Capability, and the Duration of Civil Conflict) Fearon & Laitin (2011), Enterline & Linebarger (forthcoming). Brown (1996) argues against the spillover/contagion hypotheses, instead arguing that the deliberate acts of neighbors to destabilize a country may be more significant; see also, Heraclides (1990), Hegre *et al* (2001) argue that neighboring civil wars do not have a spillover effect, but that civil wars cluster because other causal factors cluster. On Al-Qaeda or terrorist networks, see Volgy, Imwalle & Cornstassel (1997), Crenshaw (2001), Highland (2003), Russell (2005), Kilcullen (2006), Toft (2007), Kowalski (2008), Newmann (2011).

<sup>48</sup> Killicoat (2007) suggests that Africa appears to have more contagion/spillover effects for geopolitical reasons—African states have on average 3.4 neighbors, whereas the rest of the world's states have 2.1.

have less to contribute to this subject.<sup>49</sup> Although most authors note that intervention may have changed following the end of the Cold War, most do not rigorously provide a theory explaining why, nor do many quantitative studies include an indicator variable dividing their data between Cold War and post-Cold War.

Studies of intervention made during the Cold War focused on discerning what induced intervention, whether and how intervention could be effective, whether it was possible to abstain from intervention despite the superpower contest, and how nuclear weapons affected the propensity to intervene in the Third World.<sup>50</sup> In post-Cold War scholarship, intervention or even the possibility of intervention is theorized to have effects on most aspects of internal war: onset, duration, battle deaths, mediation, termination, and prevention of recidivism. Because the possibility of intervention is a structural feature faced by Third World states, scholars have found that the simple expectation of an intervention on a faction's side will significantly increase their desire to fight and belief that they can win.<sup>51</sup> But the main effects of intervention are found in studies of internal war duration. In general, intervention has been found to increase duration, but under certain circumstances – bandwagoning with the state against rebels, or engaging in diplomatic/economic intervention – can decrease duration.<sup>52</sup> Other studies attempt to discern what will prompt or ward off an intervention—e.g. there are

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<sup>49</sup> Although, the natural resources aspect of the feasibility school does have some leverage on oil's effect on inducing intervention. For a Cold War piece making the case for intervention to secure access to oil, see Luttwak (1984).

<sup>50</sup> See for example, Eley (1972), Pearson (1974a), Pearson (1974b), Pearson & Baumann (1974), Rizvi (1981), Bull (1984), Tillema (1989).

<sup>51</sup> Akcinaroglu & Radziszewski (2005), Thyne (2006), Thyne (2009). Despite their expectations, Suzuki (2007) found that major arms exports from major powers to a country had no significant effect on internal war onset.

<sup>52</sup> Mason, Weingarten & Fett (1999), Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000), Regan (2002), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom (2004), Corbetta & Dixon (2005), Regan & Aydin (2006), Fearon & Laitin (2007), Balch-Lindsay, Enterline & Joyce (2008), Gent (2008), Regan, Frank & Aydin (2009), Thyne (2009), Cunningham (2010), Aydin & Regan (2011), Enterline & Linebarger (2014), Sullivan & Karreth (2014).

conflicting results on whether internal wars with high battle deaths have a higher or lower probability of an intervention, and there are questions whether states are more likely to intervene in ethnic or political wars.<sup>53</sup> Another major focus of intervention literature is the effect of mediation, negotiated settlement, and security guarantees to end internal war and prevent it relapse. There is not a strong consensus on the effectiveness of mediation, but it does seem clear that removing great power support and providing a security guarantee as part of the settlement terms are effective at bringing the parties to negotiate and to prevent recidivism.<sup>54</sup>

### **Studies of the International System**

The third and final group of arguments within the political approach looks at systemic or structural changes to world politics as explanations for the changing patterns and character of internal war. Systemic arguments are the least common among the various areas of focus in the internal war literature. This makes intuitive sense, because the structure of the international system is the level furthest removed from the civil war itself. One hurdle faced by systemic arguments is that the causal links between structural change and the character of civil war are often unclear. Like other areas of study within the political school of thought, the authors come from mixed disciplines and use theoretical, qualitative, and quantitative approaches to discerning how structure might affect internal war. Most scholars focus on the transition from bipolarity during the Cold War to unipolarity following the Cold War—only a few look at the multipolarity of the 1800s.

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<sup>53</sup> Kauffman (1996), Regan (2000), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), Mullenbach (2001), Kuperman (2002), Corbetta (2010), Tardelli (2013), Wolak (2014). Lacina (2006) argues that it is foreign assistance and intervention that causes high battle deaths, not battle deaths that cause intervention. For a summary of the literature on what prompts interventions and what makes them successful, see Regan (2010).

<sup>54</sup> Licklider (1995), Stedman (1996b), Walter (1997), Licklider (1998), Snyder & Jervis (1999), Walter (1999), Mason, Weingarten & Fett (1999), Hartzell (1999), Regan & Stam (2000), Walter (2001), Hoddie & Hartzell (2003), de Rouen, Jr. & Sobek (2004), Fortna (2004), Greenhill & Major (2006/2007), Fearon & Laitin (2007), Bercovitch & de Rouen (2007), Woodward (2007), Dixon (2009), Thyne (2009), Beber (2012).

George Modelski made an early attempt at describing a systemic theory of intervention and internal war. He outlines the international components that the two new factions created by internal war draw from: international networks of authority; transnational solidarity; diffusion of scripts and demonstration effects; and, foreign trade and external resource bases of support. He argues that international links are inherent to internal war and create an ever-present pressure towards internationalization of the war, especially given that internal wars affect the international system and vice versa. In light of this proclivity, he writes, “The success or failure of an internal war is always dependent upon the behavior of the international system.” Internal wars would be successful if they conformed with the international authority structures of their time period (i.e. the ideological regime type of the great powers), and that hegemonic conflicts were the typical way in which the authority structure of the system was changed.<sup>55</sup>

Ann Hironaka is a more recent system-level explanation for the patterns of internal war. Unlike many other pieces, she does not focus on the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity, rather she contrasts the pre-WWII multipolar system to the post-WWII Cold War bipolar system. Her account is explicitly structural, and she argues that it is compatible with Waltz’s system theory. There are key differences from pre-WWII to post-WWII in the patterns of internal war, for example, there is a major increase in incidence of internal war following WWII. During the 1800s, the great powers typically intervened decisively, in support of the state, and on the same side as the other great powers intervening, leading to shorter duration civil wars during this period. During the Cold War, the superpowers would intervene on opposite sides of internal wars, supporting the two sides against one another, and drawing out

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<sup>55</sup> Modelski (1961). See also, Forman (1972).

the civil war indefinitely. Ideology was not as important a factor in the 1800s, especially because of the sway of monarchist great powers in the Concert system, whereas during the Cold War events in the periphery were interpreted by the superpowers through the lens of their ideological conflict, prompting more frequent interventions. But the most substantial change, according to Hironaka, is the weakness of the post-WWII states created out of the process of decolonization. This weakness is in contrast to the states of the 1800s, born in a cauldron of international war and insecurity that required them to build effective state apparatuses in order to secure their independence. In the post-WWII environment, newly created states were weak and susceptible to rebellion from below and to intervention from superpowers rather than facing interstate wars that threatened their independence. These factors taken together account for the major spike in internal war incidence following WWII.<sup>56</sup>

There have been subsequent discussions of the place of internal war in the international system, but often they do not have a clearly specified definition of ‘structure.’<sup>57</sup> Still, the shift from Cold War bipolarity to post-Cold War unipolarity has received some attention from scholars. Newman argues for a number of significant changes: the de-ideologization of world politics; decline in proxy wars; international organizations that can now aggressively pursue peacekeeping; the tendency of states to view civil war and state failure as a security threat to themselves; and, a change in the type of civil wars, from large-scale classical civil wars, to Cold War insurgencies, to post-Cold War low-intensity conflicts.<sup>58</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells are even more

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<sup>56</sup> Hironaka (2005). For multiple views on the role of war in the emergence of the state, see McNeill (1982), Jackson (1990), Tilly (1992), Ertman (1997), Hui (2005), and Nexon (2009).

<sup>57</sup> For example, see Piotrowski (1992).

<sup>58</sup> Newman (2009). See also, Goldgeier & McFaul (1992). On polarity and terrorism, see Volgy, Imwalle & Corntassel (1997). Wolak (2104) showed that superpower intervention was significantly more likely within bipolarity than unipolarity. Pearson *et al.* (2006) argue that bipolarity was far more likely to see conflicts end in

rigorous in demonstrating how the predominant type of internal war in each period changed as the polarity of the system changes. The bipolar struggle of the Cold War favored the support of insurgencies, while the end of the Cold War occasioned the withdrawal of sponsorship for many rebels groups and thus decline of insurgency and the rise of low-intensity conflicts and conventional set piece civil wars.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, there is a great deal of international relations scholarship on systemic theories of international politics, but there is no literature explicitly linking the international system to internal war. Structural realism is the most well-developed body of work on system theory, but Waltz, his structural realist successors, and even the neoclassical realists who used Waltz as a starting point have not produced theories systematically linking the great powers to internal wars.<sup>60</sup> Stephen Walt's *Revolution and War* (1996) and Steven David's "Internal War: Causes and Cures" (1997) are the exceptions in applying neorealism to the problem of internal war. The English School has done a better job of linking the great powers as "the essential skeleton of world politics" to the expansion of the state system in the periphery, but again has not made a specific effort to deal with the place of internal war within international society.<sup>61</sup> World-

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military victory than negotiated settlement, unlike unipolarity. Hartzell, Hoddie & Rothchild (2001) and Hartzell & Hoddie (2003) argue that, unexpectedly, the end of the Cold War superpower competition had no effect on increasing the duration of civil war peace settlements.

<sup>59</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010). This is related to another cluster of arguments on 'New Wars,' attempting to understand if there was a qualitative difference between Cold War and post-Cold War internal wars. The major figure in creating this debate is Mary Kaldor, who saw 'new wars' stemming from the post-Cold War emergence of a global weapons market and the declining ability of weak states to monopolize violence; see Kaldor (1999). These wars are fought between non-state actors where pitched battles are rarely observed. For reviews of this literature, see Holsti (1996), Snow (1996), Kalyvas (2001), Lemke (2008), Melander, Öberg & Hall (2009), Darabont (2010). Arguing that "weak" or "failed" states are categories hegemonically promulgated in response to the changing distribution of power, see Halvorson (2010).

<sup>60</sup> Waltz (1979), Gilpin (1981), Walt (1987), Schweller (1988), Walt (1996), Mearsheimer (2001).

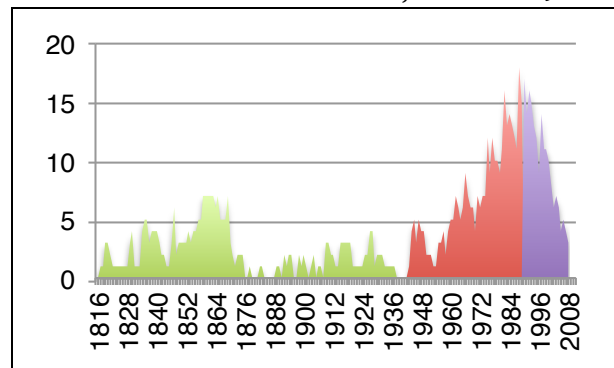
<sup>61</sup> Bull (2002) does worry about a "New Mediaevalism" if the states-system were to break down. Vincent (1974) produced a study on non-intervention as an institution of international society, but was discussing intervention very broadly defined, and not specifically with respect to internal wars. Wheeler (2000) looks specifically at humanitarian intervention and contrasts Cold War and post-Cold War periods, but argues against the realist

System Theory – a systematization of Lenin’s “Imperialism” and Andre Gunder Frank’s underdevelopment thesis<sup>62</sup> – is more centrally concerned with the core–periphery relationship and the ways in which core competition or instability has exploitative, destabilizing, or violent repercussions for the peripheries. Nevertheless, despite being systemic theories of core–periphery relations, they do not focus on the problem of civil war.<sup>63</sup>

## Where Does My Argument Contribute?

Looking at the overall picture of internal war incidence over the past two hundred years shows very clear discontinuities. Most of the literature on internal war looks for universal causal effects, but the very substantial changes to

Intra-State War Incidence, 1816–2009



the patterns of internal war then pose a puzzle. Were the massive increase in incidence during the Cold War, and the equally sharp drop in incidence following the Cold War driven by domestic political or economic factors? Were they driven by regional effects? Were they driven by the availability of lootable natural resources? It seems implausible to argue that after World War II there was a sudden change in the amount of lootable resources, or that ethnic groups only then realized that ethnicity was the critical unit for providing security, or that political actors only just then became aware that the threat of intervention was an ever-present

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position that the changing balance of power was a key determinant of changing humanitarian norms of international society. Bull & Watson (1984), Watson (1992), and Buzan & Little (2000) describe the expansion of the international system throughout the peripheries, but downplay or ignore structural effects from changing polarity, and do not directly address the phenomenon of internal war.

<sup>62</sup> Lenin (1963) and Frank (1966).

<sup>63</sup> Wallerstein (1974), Arrighi (1994), Frank (1998), Arrighi (2007).



possibility. And why did all of these factors disappear simultaneously in 1991? If political grievances do not determine the onset or duration of internal war, as the feasibility school would have it, why do turning points in the incidence of internal war occur at the same time as major shifts in the balance of power? If domestic political grievances do drive internal war incidence, does it make sense that there was a global epidemic of political grievances during one discrete period of time, which only coincidentally matches the span of the ideological superpower contest?

While there are some scholars who have probed the effect of the structure of international politics on the phenomenon of internal war, these projects are not comprehensive theories of how and why structure should affect the character and pattern of civil conflict. Modelski's effort in the 1960s was a sketch of what a systemic theory of the international politics of internal war would look like, but it was underdeveloped and specific to the problems faced during the early Cold War. Hironaka's theory is much more developed and supported with quantitative and qualitative evidence. But her theory does not attempt to distinguish bipolarity from unipolarity (which appears to be principally a consequence of a lack of post-Cold War data at the time she was writing), and the main driver of the patterns she finds is the 'weak state' hypothesis, while the structuring effects of the balance of power play only a marginal role. Other scholars that model the effect of the changing balance of power typically only distinguish between bipolarity and unipolarity, leaving the multipolar 1800s and early 1900s unexamined, despite civil wars in this period of world-historical significance: the October Revolution, Russian Civil War, China's Northern Expedition, and the Spanish Civil War.

When surveying internal war literature, Nicholas Sambanis wrote:

An important gap in the theoretical and empirical I.R. literature is the relative dearth of studies on the links between international and internal war. To some extent, this is addressed by studies of external intervention in civil war and we find that many civil wars become internationalized through such intervention. However, to date, we have no integrated theory of war (international and internal)... [a] systematic study of the links between external and internal conflict.

...

Neorealism would be relevant if systemic variables – the Cold War or bipolarity – were systematically linked to the likelihood of civil violence. However, no such evidence has yet been presented.<sup>64</sup>

I aim to fill this gap in the existing scholarship on internal war, by proposing and testing a rigorous theory that will add to our understanding of both internal war and the international system. It will address both the paucity of systemic explanations within the internal war literature, as well as adding to structural realist scholarship in an area that has been thus far ignored. More broadly, it will reassert the importance and centrality of civil conflict to realist international relations theorists, who draw insights from Thucydides, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, and Schmitt for *international* politics, yet disregard the principal concern of these thinkers: the breakdown of *internal* political order and the dire consequences that civic disintegration entails for both domestic and international security. It will further contribute to the debate among international relations theorist on the stability of different polarities.

While comparativists are the most prolific in producing studies of internal war, as one would expect, this dissertation will demonstrate the relevance of international relations theory to the problems of internal war. Unlike the majority of present internal war scholarship, statistical analysis of datasets will not be the exclusive method of supporting my theory; instead mixed methods will be used, both quantitative analysis and in-depth qualitative examination of several case studies. And, also unlike most internal war scholarship, this dissertation will

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<sup>64</sup> Sambanis (2002), pp. 225–226.

attempt to demonstrate that examining datasets that extend back only as far as World War II inherently skews our understanding of internal war, and that only by including data from the 1800s can we place the Cold War data in its proper context.

Specific to the causes and character of internal war, this dissertation will intervene in a number of important debates. First, it will show that changes to the balance of power do have an important effect on internal war. While those studies that test for international political change typically represent the end of the Cold War as an indicator variable among many other variables in regressions, I will show that it is the interaction between the balance of power and other causal factors that results in clear patterns in internal war incidence and outcomes.

Second, the global rate of internal war onset does change from period to period, but this is due to an accounting problem created by the division of conflicts into intra-state and extra-state categories. The spike in incidence of internal war during the Cold War is *not* driven by the creation of over 80 new states during decolonization; rather, the rapidly increasing incidence was due to longer durations, not greater onsets. I also show that new states are not “weak,” insofar as they are not more likely to undergo an internal war.

Third, I demonstrate that the duration of internal wars does differ substantially as the balance of power changes. Further, I show that duration is best explained by the types of intervention pursued by great powers within different distributions of power. Moreover, the interaction between polarity and ideology amplifies the effects on duration even further. Different eras will feature different outcomes for duration based on the interaction of polarity, ideology, and intervention. Fourth, I show that battle deaths are not affected by polarity, ideology, or intervention except insofar as those factors affect the duration of internal war.

Fifth, I directly address the question of whether the post-Cold War period really did feature an explosion of ethnic conflict. Some scholars of ethnic conflict do note that the phenomenon as we know it began in the 1960s coinciding with decolonization. But the reason why it became the dominant interpretation of internal war in the post-Cold War era is because of the decline of ideology, not any sudden unleashing of smoldering ethnic hatreds.<sup>65</sup>

Sixth, this dissertation intervenes in the debates over internal war settlements. While some scholars find that longer duration internal wars are more likely to end in a negotiated settlement, I show that this is actually an effect caused by the end of bipolarity—civil wars during the Cold War that endured because of superpower competition and support were suddenly able to be resolved once bipolarity ended. The post-Cold War era of unipolarity changes the conditions of possibility for humanitarianism, mediation, international organization involvement, negotiated settlements, and peacekeeping—factors that were far less feasible within the mutual suspicions of multipolar or bipolar structures.

Seventh, I show that intervention into internal wars was lower during multipolarity than during bipolarity or unipolarity, but this may be another accounting problem caused by splitting conflicts into intra-state and extra-state categories. Eighth, I show that intervention into conflicts only had a significant lengthening effect on duration during bipolarity, and not during other periods. Further, ideological conflicts during bipolarity attracted significantly more intervention per conflict than in other periods.

Finally, the foregoing intervenes in the debate between the feasibility school of thought and the political grievances school of thought. Bookended by multipolarity and unipolarity, it

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<sup>65</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 174.

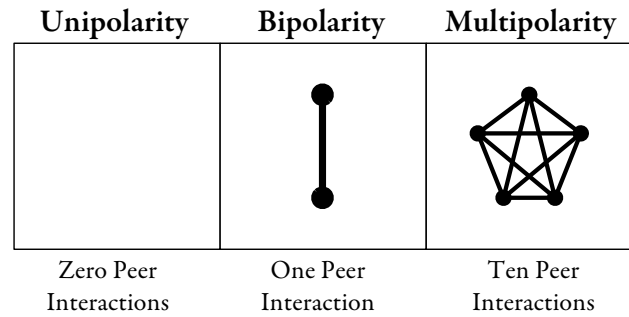
seems implausible that from 1944–1990 the factors of commodity exports, lootable resources, and topography underwent such a dramatic change that the incidence of internal war had tripled by the end of the Cold War, suddenly collapsing in 1991 unrelated to international political change. One cannot study internal war without politics, and one cannot understand how political grievances are conceived of, articulated, and invoked without also understanding the broad structures of international politics.

## **Main Argument & Conclusions**

The theory begins with the structural realist understanding of the international system: states are the principal political units that make up the system through their strategic interaction; states recognize no higher sovereign authority able to enforce law or security between them; and, states are differentiated by the distribution of capabilities among them. Because states are strategic actors that are concerned for their security, they undertake actions while conscious of the constraints other states place on their behavior. Great powers have the most capabilities within the system of states, and therefore the potential reactions of the great powers demand strategic assessment when states are attempting to pursue their interests. Realists argue that the number of great powers in the international system is an important determinant of stability – i.e. the longevity of a particular distribution of power, and the probability that the great powers will go to war more or less frequently.

During the Cold War, classical realists, structural realists, and other international relations theorists disagreed about the relative stability of a multipolar system (in which there are several great powers, typically five) versus a bipolar system (in which there are two superpowers). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, this debate was reignited concerning

the stability of a unipolar system, in which there is only one remaining superpower. At the core of their arguments were the questions of complexity and conflict. The



argument of the structural realists was that complexity and uncertainty are more likely to result in the outbreak of war, hence multipolar systems ought to be unstable compared to bipolar systems. As the number of great powers increases, the number of strategic actors that must be considered and managed rises even faster. Bipolarity sharpened but also clarified and simplified relations between the two superpowers. Unipolarity, like multipolarity, is uncertain, but the sole superpower has no strategic relations with peer competitors that it must manage and plan around out of necessity.

The theory that I develop in the next chapter departs from the accepted structural realist interpretation of bipolarity as stable and multipolarity as unstable. I find that the way bipolarity and multipolarity affect relations among great powers is *reversed* when looking at relations between great powers and the periphery. Bipolarity may be stabilizing for interstate wars, but it is tremendously destabilizing for internal wars throughout the world, producing the longest and bloodiest civil conflicts, and attracting the most intervention. Multipolarity may produce more interstate wars because of its uncertainty and complexity, but creates the fewest and shortest internal wars. Unipolarity has an unclear effect, because although it is not complex it remains uncertain, given the potential for peer competitors to rise in the future. In short, the

balance of power affects the incidence and character of internal wars, and it does so through predictable and explainable mechanisms.

Realists conceive of international politics as being shaped by the ever-present threat of war. It is not necessary for there to be a war; it is only necessary that the possibility exists for states to need to plan their actions around preserving their security. Likewise, the possibility of external intervention is an ever-present threat that shapes actors' behavior. Intervention may support factions seeking to subvert and overthrow their government, or intervention may occur when external states seek to take advantage of the turmoil in a country already undergoing internal war.<sup>66</sup> Factions considering their chances of victory will make their decisions knowing or hoping that an external power will intervene on their side. Even if that intervention never materializes, the possibility of intervention still had an effect on their decision to a revolt. In this way, the polarity matters to the character and incidence of internal war, even without direct intervention by the great powers, because the balance of power affects the propensity and expectation for intervention.

When great powers do intervene in the periphery, the stakes they perceive in the outcomes of internal wars depend on their strategic relations with the other great powers. Because of the complexity of relations between great powers during multipolarity, they will attempt to stabilize the peripheries, out of fear that "every explosion of social forces... will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and

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<sup>66</sup> The threat of foreign subversion is present in great powers just as much as in peripheral states. The Red Scare, McCarthyism, and Cold War in the United States are commonly cited. But the same logic underlies Thucydides' concern over the destruction of Hellas' *koine*, Machiavelli's Chapter XXVI plea at the close of *The Prince* for the Medicis to bring order to Italy so that they could be liberated from "the barbarians," and Hobbes' argument that sovereign authority was necessary to prevent intervention from foreign kings (Boucher (1998), p. 158).

economic organism of the world will be shattered.”<sup>67</sup> Great powers routinely intervened on the side of the embattled states to put down rebellions (even if they shared the same ideology as the rebels), and when multiple powers intervened they typically all intervened on the same side. Bipolarity, on the other hand, featured a superpower deadlock. The stability of the superpower standoff led to the export of instability to the Third World, where the superpowers engaged in drawn-out proxy conflicts by sponsoring and intervening in internal wars. Where one superpower would sponsor its partisans in a rebellion, the other superpower would intervene on the opposite side to prevent the state from collapsing, leading to especially long internal wars.<sup>68</sup>

Unipolarity does not feature a peer competitor to the sole remaining superpower, and as such the stakes in outcomes are not calculated in terms of giving advantage to a rival great power. This structure leads to disengagement from internal wars, often leading to perpetual weakness or state failure in the periphery—whereas multipolarity and bipolarity feature external support for the state’s forces in an internal war, unipolarity often does not, meaning that failed states may be a pathology unique to unipolarity. While superpower disengagement means absent or half-hearted interventions in most cases, the ostensible disinterestedness of the unipolar power opens the door for other forms of intervention, such as humanitarian intervention or international peacekeeping. Without understanding the balance of power, it will be more difficult to understand the changes to intervention, and the knock-on effects that different modes of intervention have for the character of internal war.

Just as security interests link great powers and internal factions throughout the system, so too does ideology serve to politically integrate the core and periphery. Great powers typically

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<sup>67</sup> Mackinder (1942).

<sup>68</sup> The Soviet advantage over the United States in the Third World was in their ability to strengthen clients’ state apparatuses in ways the U.S. was not prepared to do. See Huntington (1968).



sponsor ideologies, and internal factions often are motivated by ideologically-framed grievances or will opportunistically claim an ideology. The role of ideology in internal war is not reducible to great power sponsorship, but the effect that ideology has on internal war is nevertheless shaped by the balance of power. This means that ideological conflicts during the multipolar 1800s or early 1900s had a different character than ideological conflicts during the bipolar Cold War, and this effect is not due to the change from liberalism to Marxism as the dominant revolutionary ideology. While internal wars are shorter during multipolarity and longer during bipolarity, ideology amplifies those differences in terms of duration and battle deaths. Because great powers use ideology as a signal of alignment, ideology can become an important indicator if ideology can clearly link partisans to a certain great power. In multipolarity there can be multiple great powers that share the same ideology, liberalism or conservatism for example, making ideology less effective as a signal. In bipolarity featuring two superpowers with conflicting ideologies, partisans sharing their ideology can be an effective signal of alignment. Unipolarity does not feature a rival ideology sponsored by a peer competitor, because there is only one superpower. Ideology is therefore less useful as a sign of affiliation, and does not easily attract intervention from the sole superpower. The presence of ideology can serve to transform a country in which great powers have few or no intrinsic interests into a country where they have stakes in its alignment and the outcome of subversion. The practical effect of ideology is not constant over time; its importance to the character of internal war is changed as the balance of power changes.

Finally, the theory also models how polarity, waves of new state creation, and the incidence of internal war are related. A number of scholars examine whether decolonization

during the Cold War drove the massive spike in the incidence of internal war by creating a large number of weak states. I show that contrary to conventional wisdom newly created states are not especially vulnerable to internal war, in fact new states seem to suffer from internal wars at a *lower* rate than established states. Moreover, the way that new states are treated as objects of great power contestation changes as the balance of power changes. Contrasting the New World decolonization with the Old World decolonization and the collapse of the USSR and Yugoslavia allows us to put the effect of state creation on internal war into a broader context. The polar powers of each time period attempted to establish regimes for dealing with newly created states, although these regimes were frequently violated. Nevertheless, even the existence of a regime was enough to shape how great powers calculated their interventions into internal wars. These regimes were just as much reflections of the balance of power in each period as they were reflections of normative and contingent factors. Multipolarity's Monroe Doctrine was a regime of exclusion to prevent recolonization. Bipolarity, where the political stakes in new states were higher, saw (mostly failed) attempts at neutralization. And unipolarity, characterized by disengagement, has an internationalized and institutional regime for integrating new states.

Multipolarity is therefore expected to produce the most conservative character for internal war. The great powers maintain a stability preference toward the peripheries, and so the multipolar period saw the lowest rate of onset, the shortest average duration, infrequent intervention, and low average battle deaths despite military victory (as opposed to negotiated peace) being the principal mode of terminating conflicts. Ideological conflicts during multipolarity were shorter than non-ideological conflicts. And, despite creation of almost

seventy new states during this period, “weak” new states did not contribute significantly to the overall onset of civil war, nor did they attract external interventions.

Bipolarity is expected to produce the most intense environment for internal war. The superpower standoff led to the export of instability to the peripheries, and so the bipolar period saw the highest rate of onset, intervention, and battle deaths, and longest average duration. Ideology in bipolarity had the opposite effect that it had during multipolarity, increasing the duration, battle death, and external intervention. Almost ninety new states were created over the course of the second wave of decolonization. New states created during bipolarity were more prone to internal conflict than those created during multipolarity or unipolarity.

Unipolarity is expected to produce a permissive environment for internal war, neither conservative nor extreme, characterized principally by the attempted depoliticization of the periphery. Onsets, duration, battle deaths, and interventions all lay between the lows of multipolarity and the highs of bipolarity. The proportion of negotiated peace accords and ceasefires doubles in unipolarity relative to military victories. This is accompanied by a precipitous drop in the number of ideological conflicts. And despite the concern over “weak” states in the post-Cold War era, new states created during unipolarity have been no more or less prone to collapse into civil war.

## **Variables**

The purpose of this dissertation is to shed light on why there are broad patterns in the incidence and character of internal war over the past two hundred years. The outcomes being explained are variables associated with the patterns and character of internal war. Thus the dependent variables (DV) include:

- The rate of internal war onsets;
- The duration of internal wars;
- Patterns in internal war termination;
- The predominant type of termination;
- Patterns in the incidence of internal war;
- The rate and type of intervention into internal wars;
- The number of battle deaths in internal wars;
- The presence and effect of ideology in the politics of internal wars;
- The role of formal or informal imperialism in the politics of internal wars;
- Patterns of state creation as it affects the incidence of internal war; and,
- The regime attempting to govern the politics of newly created states.

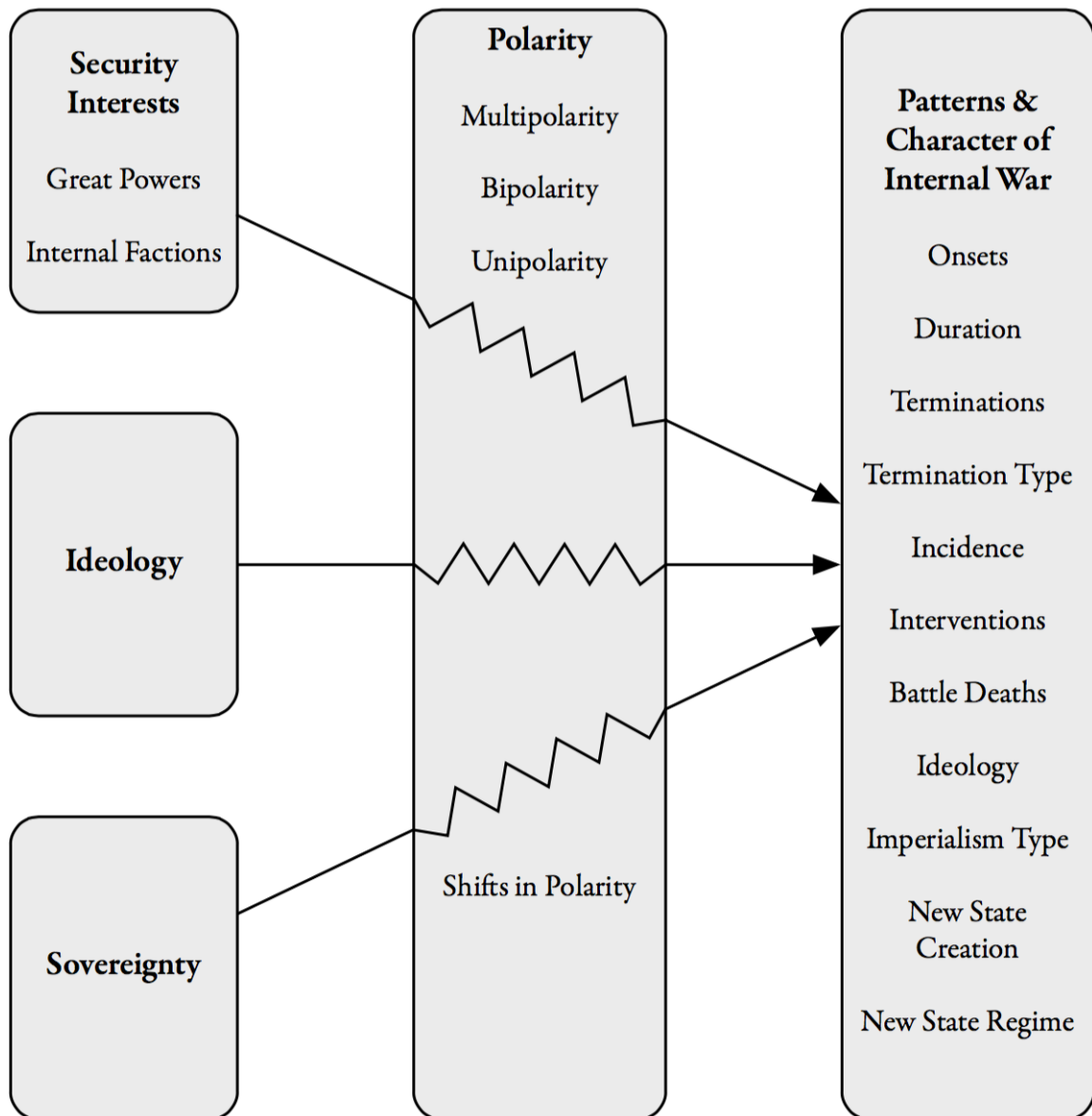
The large number of dependent variables should make for a strong test of the theory.

Many historically and politically important effects from period to period must be observed in order to confirm the theory's expectations. Some of these variables can be quantified, described, and tested: the rate of onsets and interventions; magnitude of duration and battle deaths; and, patterns of incidence, terminations, termination types, imperialism, and new state creation.

Others require qualitative examination of the historical evidence: how the type of intervention affects internal war duration; whether great powers consider the international balance of power when deciding whether to intervene; whether the ability of internal factions to maneuver politically is affected by the number of great powers that could intervene; why ideology might intensify internal wars during one polarity but not another; how the politics of imperialism affect how internal factions relate to external powers and vice versa; whether new "weak" states

interact with great powers differently than we might expect; and, why different periods have different regimes for managing the arrival of waves of new states.

In order to explain variation in the dependent variables, we must look at several causal variables. First, there are three variables being examined for their effect on the patterns and character of internal war: actors' security interests and external intervention; transnational political ideology; and, the institution of sovereignty, as it reflects patterns of imperialism and new state creation. These are independently causal variables (IV) that can be present or not and to varying degrees. Second, there is the study variable: the polarity of the international system. This variable is not independently causal, rather it is a condition variable (CV). Condition variables operate antecedent to the independent variables and govern the magnitude or type of effect that the independent variables will have on the dependent variables. In other words, as the balance of power in the international system changes (CV), the effects that intervention, ideology, and sovereignty (IV) have on internal war (DV) will also change.



When analyzing the large-N data, we can describe how both the independent variables and the dependent variables change as the conditional variable changes. The dataset can be divided into groups corresponding to the multipolar era, bipolar era, and unipolar era, and changes to the magnitude or type of the independent variables can be tested, as well as changes to the patterns and character of the dependent variables.

When performing the case studies, we will take a different approach in order to gain leverage when making across-case comparisons. Because we want to focus in on the specific

effect of the conditional variable, this will be the only causal factor allowed to vary. The other causal variables will be held as constant as is possible across cases; they will be treated more like parameters than independent variables.<sup>69</sup> In this way, we can attempt to isolate the structuring effect of the conditional variable. In order to hold the independent variables constant, each case will investigate a civil war in which:

- External powers have a moderate extrinsic interest in the outcome;
- Internal factions appeal for external support;
- External powers engage in a limited intervention in which they must assess the costs and benefits of escalation;
- Internal factions profess an ideology that could serve to attract or antagonize involved great powers;
- Formal or neo-colonialism is a contentious issue for both great powers and internal factions; and,
- New state creation is at least partially implicated in the roots of the civil war.

The three cases will each be drawn from a different era – representing multipolarity, bipolarity, or unipolarity – but they will all attempt to hold the above variables – representing interests, ideology, and sovereignty – more or less constant.

The theoretical framework used to analyze the cases is structural realism, as first outlined by Kenneth Waltz.<sup>70</sup> However, while structural realism is built to explain the recurrence of the balance of power throughout history and the different logics of multipolarity

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<sup>69</sup> On approaches dividing causal variables into operational variables (allowed to vary) and parameters (held constant), see Smelser (1968), Chapter 1.

<sup>70</sup> Waltz (1979).

and bipolarity, it is not sufficiently specified or operationalized to tackle the question of internal war's relationship to international politics. The theory developed here (see Chapter 2) will derive from structural realism a set of expectations for core–periphery relations. It will then infer how the character of internal war should change as the international balance of power changes, providing us with a set of testable hypotheses. Like structural realism's predictions more generally, the hypotheses developed here are probabilistic, but are nevertheless unique and clear enough to allow for a strong comparison between cases.<sup>71</sup>

## Quantitative Sources & Methods

The first test of the theory will be a large-N statistical analysis. The principal dataset is Kristian Gleditsch's "Expanded War Data" Version 2.0.<sup>72</sup> I have added to this dataset by coding several new variables. In places, it is supplemented by Gleditsch & Ward's "List of Independent States" Version 5.1, and the UCDP "Conflict Terminations" dataset.<sup>73</sup> The principal method of analysis is simply descriptive, but this is also supplemented by nonparametric tests.

The Gleditsch civil war data was constructed on the basis of prior work done by Gleditsch and Ward on the membership of the international system. Gleditsch and Ward undertook a revision of the Correlates of War's criteria for membership in the international

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<sup>71</sup> George & Bennett single out structural realism's predictions as too general and probabilistic to offer testable predictions. In their view, structural realist claims require "supplementary process-tracing or other checks." George & Bennett (2005), p. 202. On *unique* predictions as a strong test of a theory, see Van Evera (1997), pp. 30–34, 75–76.

<sup>72</sup> Version 2.0, updated 5 November 2013; based on Gleditsch (2004).

<sup>73</sup> Version 5.1, updated 14 March 2013; based on Gleditsch & Ward (1999) although with some alterations discussed here: [http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst\\_casedesc.pdf](http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst_casedesc.pdf). On the UCDP dataset, see Kreutz (2010).



system.<sup>74</sup> They believed that the need for a certain level of diplomatic recognition or for international organization membership underrepresenting states that were otherwise considered significant actors in international politics during the 1800s.<sup>75</sup> Gleditsch and Ward changed the criteria, thereby increasing the number of intra-state wars listed by about 12%.<sup>76</sup>

Gleditsch's "Expanded War Data" also began as a revision to the Correlates of War dataset, which included civil wars in countries counted as members in on Gleditsch & Ward's revised list of independent states, and also a subset of extra-state wars.<sup>77</sup> Gleditsch distinguishes between 'colonial' and 'imperial' extra-state wars: imperial wars are waged between a system member and a non-system member; whereas colonial wars are conflicts in which the state fought its colonial subjects. Insofar as colonial conflicts were usually about self-determination or independence, they are not so far removed from secessionist intra-state wars.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> On COW's membership criteria, see Sarkees & Wayman (2010).

<sup>75</sup> These criteria were that the political entity, before 1920, had to have formal diplomatic relations with both Britain and France, and after 1920, had to be a member of the League of Nations, United Nations, or have formal diplomatic relations with any two "major powers." The current COW 4.0 keeps these criteria; see Sarkees & Wayman (2010), Chapter 1. Tanisha Fazal also criticizes the COW system membership criteria, but instead of dispensing with the UK and France as "legitimizers," she expands what counts as recognition. Where COW requires *both* the UK and France to establish formal diplomatic relations at the *chargé d'affaires* level, Fazal proposes to also code a state as a member if it concludes a bilateral commerce, alliance, or navigation treaty with *either* Britain or France. See Fazal (2007), Appendix 1.

<sup>76</sup> Their new criteria moved away from formal diplomatic recognition by European great powers, and instead selected states that had relatively autonomous administration over a territory, that were considered a distinct political entity by other regional actors, and had a population greater than 250,000 (thus excluding microstates). Gleditsch & Ward (1999), pp. 388, 401.

<sup>77</sup> For the majority of the theory chapter and quantitative chapter, I do not include the colonial extra-state wars. However, in the theory chapter I do note the transition from imperial sovereignty to nation-state sovereignty as important to the understanding of internal wars, and I make the initial case for understanding the continuity between extra- and intra-state wars. In the quantitative chapter, I examine the extra-state wars in addition to the intra-state wars in order to test the continuity between the two categories, both in terms of the overall rate of conflict onset and the overall rate of great power intervention into the periphery. I test the hypothesized characteristics of intra-state wars across periods, and in some cases I add extra-state conflicts to determine whether their inclusion strengthens or weakens the observed outcomes. The three case studies – chapters 4, 5, and 6 – likewise probe the colonial roots of later civil wars.

<sup>78</sup> Gleditsch (2004), pp. 233–234, 242, 246–247.

I extend Gleditsch's dataset by introducing three new variables – *polarity*, *ideology*, and *new state* – and coding each intra- or extra-state war accordingly. For *polarity* every conflict was coded according to the year of its onset:

- 'Multipolarity' from 1816–1943;
- 'Bipolarity' from 1944–1990;<sup>79</sup> and,
- 'Unipolarity' from 1991–2010.

Readers may object that date of onset may not best capture the predominant structural effects acting on a conflict if it endures across a shift from one polarity to another. This is not an issue for the transition from multipolarity to bipolarity, because World War II interrupts all other conflicts and the overall incidence of civil and colonial wars falls to zero from 1939–1943. However, the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity does see a number of conflicts that straddle both periods. The effects of that transition on civil war duration and termination are examined in Chapter 3.

The *ideology* variable was created to examine the prevalence of transnational political ideologies' involvement in internal war.<sup>80</sup> Each conflict in the dataset was coded as 'ideological' if it met any of three criteria:

1. One of the factions or parties to the internal conflict explicitly defined its identity in ideological terms (e.g. identified as a royalist party or as a Marxist-Leninist party);

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<sup>79</sup> Bipolarity is dated from 1944 instead of 1945 in order to capture the onset of the Greek Civil War in the bipolar period rather than the multipolar period.

<sup>80</sup> The Center for Systemic Peace's Political Instability Task Force does produce dataset for four kinds of internal conflict, including political conflicts. They code wars as adverse regime changes, ethnic wars, genocides/politicides, or revolutionary wars. However, their data only goes as far back as 1955, and their coding of what counts as a conflict as significantly different enough from K. Gleditsch that using their data might present compatibility problems or introduce biases. See Marshall, Gurr & Harff (2009).

2. One of the leaders explicitly expressed an ideological affiliation or goal either in starting the conflict or during the conflict; or,
3. One of the central issues of the conflict was tied inherently to an ideological affiliation (e.g. conflicts fought over the demand for a parliament or constitution during the 1800s were almost always understood in terms of liberalism).

Coding each conflict required a qualitative judgment about the factions and issues central to the war. These are admittedly broad criteria that aim to capture not just those conflicts genuinely begun over ideological issues or by partisans of a certain ideology, but also those conflicts that during their course saw an opportunistic adoption of an ideological positions as a means of signaling to outside powers or attracting external support. For my purposes, it is less important to determine whether conflicts were genuinely ideological or whether the conflicts were even primarily ideological (as opposed to ethnic, religious, or resources/power-seeking), than it is to determine whether or not the character or course of the internal war was affected by transnational political polarization.

*New state* was introduced to test whether states are particularly prone to descend into civil dissolution in the years immediately following their independence when presumably their state-building and nation-building projects are still incomplete. Fearon & Laitin used the first two years of independence as the criteria for determining what counted as a ‘new state.’<sup>81</sup> Assuming states need only two years to develop sufficient capacity such that they are no longer prone to internal conflict seems optimistic. When coding conflicts as occurring in a ‘new state,’ I extended the period of assumed political consolidation to fifteen years, which I believe is a

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<sup>81</sup> Fearon & Laitin (2003), p. 85.

tougher test of new state weakness. Intra-state wars were coded as ‘new state’ conflicts by comparing the year the state became a member of the system in Gleditsch & Ward’s “List of Independent States” and the year of conflict onset in Gleditsch’s “Expanded War Data.”<sup>82</sup> If the onset occurred within fifteen years of the state’s birth, I coded it as a new state conflict.

Using these datasets, I primarily provide a descriptive analysis of the patterns and character of internal wars from period to period. As above, I divided the data into three groups, based on the polarity of the international system – multipolar, bipolar, or unipolar. Once divided, the differences across periods are described by comparing their median or average rates, distributions, or broader patterns. I attempt to highlight differences I believe to be historically, politically, or strategically significant.

Where appropriate, I have also probed the differences between periods with inferential statistical tests. Rather than use inferential tests as a way of proving my theory, I have attempted to employ them as a form of applied skepticism. Civil wars are diverse and wide-ranging in their characteristics, and it should be helpful to be able to eliminate across-period differences that seem to be systematic, but actually cannot be reliably distinguished from chance or from the biasing effect of countries that consistently appear as outliers (e.g. China appears as an extreme case in both duration and battle deaths in several different wars).

I began with two reservations about using inferential statistics. First, the datasets are ostensibly data about the entire population of internal wars over the past 200 years, not samples from which one could infer the characteristics of the whole population. Second, the data violate most of the assumptions necessary to perform parametric inferential statistical tests.

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<sup>82</sup> Gleditsch & Ward (1999); and, Gleditsch (2004).

It may be possible to justify treating internal war data as samples rather than as population data. Both the COW and Gleditsch datasets saw a substantial expansion in the number of observations included between the most current version and their previous version. In 2000, COW 3.0 listed 213 intra-state wars, but by 2010's COW 4.0 had expanded to 335 intra-state wars, an increase of almost 60%. In Singer & Small's original COW dataset, only 106 intra-state wars were counted.<sup>83</sup> In 2007, Gleditsch's "Expanded War Data" 1.52 listed 336 civil war conflicts, but by 2013 Gleditsch's version 2.0 listed 466 conflicts, an increase of almost 40%. Comprehensive though they are, the datasets we have today in all likelihood do not encompass the true population of internal wars.<sup>84</sup> More instances of internal war will certainly be added as scholars redefine which political entities "count" as states that could experience an intra-state war as such, and as historical research is better able to estimate whether past conflicts met the battle death threshold for "war."

Nevertheless, the internal war data examined here is still not suited for parametric inferential statistics.<sup>85</sup> The groups being analyzed – civil wars in multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity – are not randomly selected, are highly skewed, and even when transformed are not normally distributed. Because they are not randomly selected, we also cannot be confident that the sampling distribution of the sample means would be normally distributed. It could be argued (although I do not think it is persuasive) that some of the observations are not independent, given the spillover, bad-neighbor, and recidivism effects that connect some civil

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<sup>83</sup> Sarkees & Wayman (2010), p. 337.

<sup>84</sup> Indeed, when putting forward his "Expanded War List," Gleditsch criticized other scholars for treating the COW dataset as if it were the entire population of wars. Gleditsch (2004), p. 243.

<sup>85</sup> Despite my reservations about parametric statistical tests, their use nevertheless dominates the civil war literature produced by comparativists, see: Sambanis (2002), Hegre & Sambanis (2006), Bleaney & Dimico (2009), and Licklider (1998).

wars. The number of observations in the groups being compared are of unequal proportions. And, the variances of the groups being compared are too different, where one group will often be more than double the variance of another.<sup>86</sup>

Because parametric statistical tests will not produce valid results, I have instead used nonparametric tests – the Kruskal-Wallis *H*-test, Mann-Whitney *U*-test, and Fisher's *z* Transformation Test – to examine whether or not an observed difference in a given internal war variable across polarities is systematic (i.e. statistically distinguishable from chance). Although the data violates the above assumptions necessary for parametric inferential statistics, the nonparametric tests do not rely on those assumptions about the data (with the exception of independence) in order to produce valid results. However, nonparametric tests are less sensitive than parametric tests and consequently have a greater chance of producing false negatives, i.e. failing to recognize a difference as significant. I am more comfortable with setting a high bar and reporting only clearly significant results while eliminating less significant differences, than I am in reporting “significant” results from an illegitimately applied parametric test thereby running the risk of delivering false positives as support for my hypotheses. As an additional measure, I have performed the same set of tests on three randomized groupings of the Gleditsch data—grouping the data by polarity does not constitute random samples, but checking the

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<sup>86</sup> ANOVA is moderately robust to violations of its assumptions. However, results can be misleading if the distributions of the groups being compared are highly skewed, there are 2x or greater differences in standard deviation between groups, group sizes are unequal, and the groups are not randomly selected. In civil war data divided into groups by polarity, all of those assumptions are violated, and thus the nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test may be more appropriate. Agresti and Finlay (2009), pp. 370, 400–401. Healey (2010), pp. 238, 242–243. Kruskal-Wallis is more robust to violations of these assumptions, especially skewness and group size. It does require a weaker version of the homogeneity of variances assumption: the variances of the groups do not need to be as strictly equal (robust up to 4x a difference in variance between groups), but the distributions of the groups must have the same shape (e.g. all highly right skewed).

same tests against three groups with a random assortment of the data can give us another layer of skepticism.

Because I wish to keep the focus on the historical, political, and strategic significance of the differences across periods, I have placed a more comprehensive account of the statistical tests in an appendix to Chapter 3. The tests and their results are reported there in detail. Given the issues with internal war data, the results should be taken with a grain of salt, even though nonparametric tests were used. The results demonstrating that a difference is *not* significant should be considered more reliable, whereas those reporting a significant difference should be viewed as a warrant for further investigation rather than as proof of a causal relationship.

## **Case Study Design**

Following the large-N analysis of the Gleditsch dataset on civil war, this dissertation will then offer three in-depth case studies: the 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war, the 1959–1975 Laotian civil war, and the 1998–1999 Kosovo War.

Each case is an instance of an internal war in which the structure of the international system ought to have had an effect in shaping its character. The first objective will be to test whether the historical evidence in each case is congruent with the expectations generated by the theory. The second objective will be to demonstrate by comparison across cases that these three internal wars have different characteristics (the dependent variables) due to changes to the international balance of power (the conditional variable).

The three case studies were selected to allow for across-case comparison, and to allow for examination of the effects of the structuring effect of polarity (the conditional variable) on all three causal forces linking international politics to internal war (the independent variables:

security interests, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty). This meant that potential cases that involved only two or one of the independent variables (e.g. ideology or imperialism not a factor, or no threat of external intervention) were ruled out. Ideally, I would have performed 12–15 case studies, demonstrating that interaction effects between interests, ideology, and sovereignty were not biasing the perceived effect of polarity on the internal war outcomes. But, for reasons of time and length, three case studies needed to be able to cover all the independent variables.

One case from each of three periods of the balance of power – multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity – must be selected so that across-case comparisons on the structuring effect of polarity (the conditional variable) can be made. These cases had to have similar values across the independent variables—because it is the effect of the conditional variable that interests us, the independent variables need to be held as constant as is possible for events separated by over 150 years. As above, each case therefore features: great power extrinsic interests in the conflict; internal faction appeals for support; a limited intervention; an ideological aspect; decolonization or recolonization as an issue; and, the politics surrounding newly created states. The cases were selected to have intermediate values for the independent variables, especially regarding intervention. This allows us to better discern whether the conditional variable is magnifying or mitigating the effects of the independent variables.

Unlike Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, and Stephen Walt, cases of world-historical significance were not selected.<sup>87</sup> The abnormally large stakes and intrinsic importance of such cases might not provide a convincing argument for the broadly structuring effect of the

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<sup>87</sup> These three authors chose to examine the French Revolution, the American Civil War, the Russian Revolution, China's Wuhan Uprising, period of Warlordism, and subsequent Civil War, the Young Turks, and the Iranian Revolution, among others. See Moore (1966), Skocpol (1979), and Walt (1996).



international balance of power. It stands to reason that revolutionary civil wars within great powers or regional powers would have major international implications, and that other great powers would see their interests bound up in the outcomes. The constraining effect of structure on civil wars will be better demonstrated by cases in which great powers lack intrinsic interests in the country suffering from upheaval. Extremely obscure cases were also not selected, because they are generally hampered by a lack of available (much less data rich) diplomatic, military, or political histories. Finally, the cases studies are civil wars that I had little prior knowledge about—selecting Uruguay, Laos, and Kosovo was a gamble, because I did not know in advance whether the dependent variable outcomes would ultimately bear out my theory's expectations.

The first goal of the case studies is to take the theory and hypotheses presented in Chapter 2, and assess whether or not the historical evidence is congruent with the theoretical predictions. Does the theory explain why these civil wars should have exhibited the characteristics that they did? If the outcomes do not match the range of theoretical expectations, this would falsify the theory. But if the civil wars seem to confirm the several hypotheses advanced, then it is possible that a causal relationship exists between the conditional variable (as it affects the independent variables) and the dependent variables.<sup>88</sup> Having a large-N statistical generalization or process-tracing to support the congruence method allows us to be more confident that a causal relationship actually exists.<sup>89</sup>

The three case studies taken together can then be subject to across-case comparison. Each civil war has reasonably similar circumstances with respect to intervention, ideology, and

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<sup>88</sup> Van Evera (1997), pp. 73–74.

<sup>89</sup> George & Bennett (2005), Chapter 9.

sovereignty (IVs), but the conflicts occur during categorically different periods of the balance of power – multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity (CV). By isolating the conditional variable, we can then assess whether differences in the dependent variables across cases are potentially caused by the structuring effect of the conditional variable.<sup>90</sup> The method of difference can give us a first step toward establishing the causal weight of polarity, but is not definitive on its own.<sup>91</sup>

In order to strengthen the persuasiveness of the case studies, we engage in a limited amount of process-tracing. There are multiple actors in each case study – several external countries and two or more internal factions – and the historical record can shed evidence on their decision-making. In each case, I have endeavored to demonstrate that the actors assessed their goals with respect to the international balance of power. Great powers perceived their stakes in the outcome and framed their actions in terms of their relations with the other great powers. Internal factions seeking assistance were acutely and explicitly aware of the possibility of playing great powers off of one another, or attempting to have the ‘tail wag the dog’ knowing that the great power would have a difficult time abandoning them once involved. As a supplement to large-N data, congruence testing, and the method of difference, process-tracing can give us insight into whether the actors actually saw their behavioral constraints and opportunities in terms of the balance of power (CV).<sup>92</sup>

In sum, the methodological choices made for both large-N data and case studies attempt to set a high bar for the evidence in confirming the expectations generated by this dissertation’s novel extension of structural realism. The Gleditsch dataset was selected to

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<sup>90</sup> Van Evera (1997), p. 73.

<sup>91</sup> George & Bennett (2005), p. 156.

<sup>92</sup> George & Bennett (2005), Chapter 10. Van Evera specifically uses evidence of decision-makers’ perceptions and motives as an example where process-tracing can fortify structural realism’s claims. Van Evera (1997), pp. 64–65.

increase the amount of data available in the 1800s, and three additional variables were added in order to cover additional facets of internal war. Statistical tests were also performed as an additional measure beyond descriptive statistics. Nonparametric tests were chosen because of concerns about the data, and because (being less powerful than parametric tests) they set a higher bar for significance. In order to increase explanatory leverage, the case studies were selected on the presence of all three independent (parameter) variables: interests strong enough to provoke an intervention; presence of transnational political ideologies; and, a date of onset close enough to the state's independence. The magnitude of the independent variables were constant enough that we could focus on discerning the effect of the condition variable, the polarity of the international system. This will allow both an examination of the congruence of the historical evidence with the theory's expectations, and an across-case comparison highlighting the different effects of different polarities on the character of internal war.

## **Roadmap**

The rest of the dissertation is organized into four parts: deriving and detailing the theory and its expectations for different polarities; testing the theory against civil war datasets; examining three case studies to determine whether actors did perceive their actions relative to the international balance of power; and, the conclusion, which summarizes the findings, the theory's limits and generalizability, and the dissertation's implications for theory and policy.

Chapter 2 puts forward a structural realist theory explaining why and how the international balance of power is expected to shape the patterns and character of internal war. It briefly explains the realist system-structural theory of international politics, with special emphasis on the role of the balance of power in shaping the behavior of actors within the

system. Next, the inherent characters of different distributions of power are described. This allows us to deduce how different distributions of power will affect three aspects of international politics that link great powers and internal factions: security interests, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty. Finally, this chapter concludes by outlining the theory's expectations for multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity in such a way that they can be tested against the historical record.

Chapter 3 probes whether the theory's base expectation that the three periods of the balance of power exhibit different effects on civil war, and then tests specific hypotheses about how a range of civil war variables should differ from period to period. It first outlines the puzzle presented by the data on internal war incidence, before describing the dataset and the methods used to analyze it. It proceeds to analyze different variables describing the character and patterns of internal war, comparing those variables divided into three groups based on different periods of the balance of power (multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity). It shows that there are clear differences in internal war onsets across periods, but that these differences may actually be caused by several waves of new state creation. It also demonstrates that internal war duration changes substantially from period to period, and these differences are amplified by the relationship between transnational political ideology and the distribution of power. Next, the patterns of internal war termination and the type of terminations (military or negotiated) are linked to shifts in the distribution of power. Finally, intervention into internal wars is shown to vary substantially from period to period – both the rate of intervention and mode of intervention – although these patterns may also be the result of imperialism and decolonization. However, while duration affects battle death, intervention does not.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are the three case studies that examine the historical record in detail to determine whether their character and outcomes bear out the theoretical expectations, and specifically look at whether the actors were constrained in their decision-making and behavior by the international balance of power.

Chapter 4 studies the 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war to test whether the historical record corresponds with the hypothesized effects of multipolarity. It begins by describing the central dispute between the factions in Uruguay, and puts that dispute into its larger regional and historical contexts. Then it proceeds in three parts, examining the interests of internal factions, regional actors, and great powers, examining whether liberal ideology played an important role in shaping the conflict, and examining how Uruguay's recent independence and possibility of recolonization affected actors' behaviors. It concludes by assessing the degree to which the case study illustrates the effect of multipolarity in constraining the actions of the internal and external actors as they weighed what courses to take.

Chapter 5 examines the 1959–1975 Laotian civil war to test whether the historical record corresponds with the hypothesized effects of bipolarity. It begins by describing the central dispute between the factions in Laos, and puts that dispute into its larger regional context. Then it proceeds in three parts, first examining the interests of internal factions, regional actors, and superpowers. Second it examines whether and how Marxist ideology played an important role in shaping the conflict, using the neutralist faction to better understand the constraints faced by ideological partisans. Third, it examines how Laos' recent independence and concerns about neo-colonialism affected actors' behaviors. It concludes by

assessing the degree to which the case study illustrates the effect of bipolarity in constraining the actions of the internal and external actors as they weighed what courses to take.

Chapter 6 assesses the 1998–1999 Kosovo War to test whether the historical record corresponds with the hypothesized effects of unipolarity. It begins by describing the central conflict between the factions in Kosovo, and puts that secession attempt into its larger regional and historical contexts. It proceeds in three parts, first examining how unipolarity created an incentive for disengagement on the part of the sole remaining superpower, while simultaneously limiting the freedom of maneuver for internal factions appealing for support. Second, it shows the limited effect that ideology has on the course of the war, even though the ideologies involved had been crucial to perceptions of internal conflicts during the Cold War. Third, it questions the extent to which ideas about imperialism and colonialism continued to shape the perceptions of the internal and external actors both. It concludes by assessing the degree to which the historical record (recent though this conflict is) confirms the expected constraints of unipolarity, and whether the involved actors perceived their actions in terms of the unipolar distribution of power.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the hypotheses and findings, by considering the theory's limitations and its generalizability beyond the three case studies, and finally by discussing the dissertation's implications for theory and policy.

# Structural Realism & Internal War

## *CHAPTER TWO*

The aim of this chapter is to explain why and how the number of great powers shaped the pattern and character of internal war over the past two hundred years. The introduction briefly recapitulates the puzzle of internal war incidence, then gives the main claims that this dissertation's theory will attempt to demonstrate, and describes the several aspects of internal war addressed by the theory. There are five sections that follow.

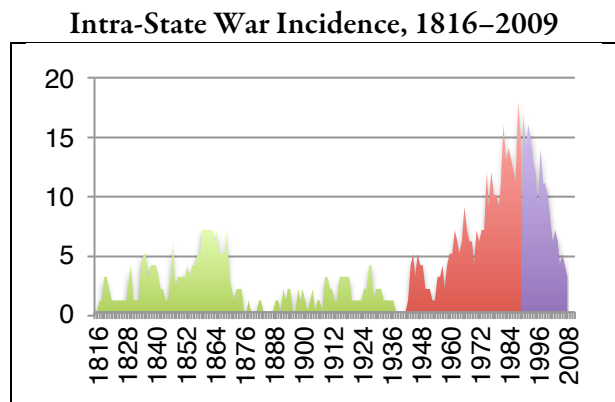
First, there is a brief overview of system theory and structural realism, setting the foundation for the subsequent discussion of polarity and its structuring effect on international politics. Second, it will show that the strategic interests of great powers and internal war factions in each other are structured by polarity, and it will show how the main features of different polarities affect crucial aspects of internal war. Third, it will clarify how ideologies affect internal wars, explain how great powers and internal factions may be linked by ideology, and then argues that ideology has different effects on internal war under different polarities.

Fourth, it examines the mutually constitutive relationship between new state creation and shifts in polarity, explains that different polarities create different proclivities toward

formal or informal imperialism, and then investigates why a focus on the politics of new state creation changes our understanding of the broad patterns of internal war. Fifth, the expectations for internal war generated by the previous three sections are categorized and discussed by polarity: multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity. Finally, the conclusion recapitulates the theory and briefly explains how the subsequent four chapters test the theory.

### *THE PUZZLE*

The incidence of internal war since the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 displays a remarkable correlation with the major turning points in international political history. During the Concert of Europe there were recurrent bouts of



domestic upheaval.<sup>1</sup> The age of New Imperialism, World War I, and the inter-war period saw a long-trough in ongoing internal wars. And, following World War II there was a major spike in internal conflict that collapsed immediately following the end of the Cold War.

If civil war is primarily driven by internal factors—ethnic, religious, or linguistic divisions, historical grievances, distributional conflict, defects of the political system, elite power struggle or predation—the correlation of internal war with world-historical landmarks should demand an answer. No doubt that internal war is driven primarily by internal factors, but it

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<sup>1</sup> While the period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and World War I is known as “the long peace,” this description holds only for inter-state wars between the European great powers. As Sandra Halperin has shown, the 1800s produced over 50% more conflicts than the 1700s if one includes intra-state and extra-state wars. Types of overlooked conflicts broadly fell into four categories: labor, enfranchisement, ethnic, and imperial. Halperin (2004), Chapter 4. I am grateful to Professor Halperin for graciously providing me with her dataset.



seems implausible that the aggregate pattern of hundreds of internal conflicts over the past two hundred years only coincidentally follows major changes to the international system.

### *MAIN CLAIMS*

This theory argues that patterns of internal war cannot be understood without knowledge of the structure of international politics. As the international system undergoes major changes, the character of internal war likewise changes. The broad patterns in internal war can be explained with a system structural theory, which can generate a number of specific hypotheses that ought to confirm a causal link between international politics and internal war.

The ‘character of internal war’ investigated here is more than just variables associated with incidence; it also encompasses measures of intensity and political aspects of internal war such as ideology and post-colonial state-building. A system structural approach is a novel one: international relations explanations of internal war are rare in a field of study dominated by comparativists.<sup>2</sup> It is counterintuitive to think that internal wars are substantially influenced by the international system. Internal wars, if they were truly deserving of the designation ‘internal,’ would not be greatly affected by the external political environment in which they occur. However, a system structural approach results in a story of the phenomena of internal war told in terms of its interaction with the great powers,<sup>3</sup> in which the lessons learned about internal war during one period are not necessarily applicable to subsequent periods. Without such a theory, the unique aspects and lessons of individual cases of internal war cannot be satisfactorily distinguished from the broader patterns and trends that characterize internal war in different periods of international history.

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<sup>2</sup> For a recent study of how the international system affects internal war, see Kalyvas & Balcells (2010).

<sup>3</sup> The first history told explicitly in this manner: Ranke, *Die großen Mächte* (1833).

The system structural explanation focuses on the effect of different distributions of power on internal war. As the number of great powers changes, the constraints faced both by internal factions and by external great powers also change. Three causal factors in international politics play a central role in linking internal war to the international system: security interests, transnational political ideology, and new sovereign state creation. This theory attempts to satisfy the need for a rigorous explanation of the relationship between international politics and internal war by looking at the constraints the structure of the system places on the three different causal mechanisms. We can then examine what expectations each polarity generates for the character of internal war through history and then weigh those expectations against the historical record.

This theory begins by making the following claims, from general to specific:

- C1. International politics has a significant effect on internal war.
- C2. The structure of the international system affects the patterns and character of internal war.
  - a. Great power interests, internal faction strategies, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty are constrained by the structure of international system.
  - b. Great power interests, internal faction strategies, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty affect internal war.
- C3. Different distributions of power will structure the mechanisms affecting the patterns and character of internal war in different ways.

- a. Multipolarity produces the most *conservative* circumstances and character of internal war. Internal war does not last long and is less intense.
- b. Bipolarity produces the most *extreme* environment and character of internal war. Internal war lasts the longest and is at its most intense.
- c. Unipolarity produces a *permissive* environment for internal war that does not incline toward either extreme. Internal war features less conflictual resolutions.

#### *CHARACTER OF INTERNAL WAR*

The pattern of internal wars over the past two hundred years is captured by variables relating to the incidence of internal war: onset, duration, termination, imperialism, and new state creation. The number of onsets per year may help explain some of the large-scale patterns in internal war. If the onset of internal war is primarily driven by internal circumstances, then shifts in the international distribution of power should not have a major effect on the rate of onset. However, it may be the case that certain polarities create stronger incentives for great powers to sponsor revolts. Internal war duration ought to be the most responsive to international politics, because great powers can have the most direct influence over duration, either through intervening to put down a revolt, or by supplying one side with enough support to sustain their ability to continue fighting. Conversely, terminations may reflect willingness of external patrons to discontinue support for subversion and rebellion, a factor that could conceivably be affected by a lessening of tensions in international politics or by a shift in the distribution of power. Taken together, onsets, duration, and terminations account for the overall pattern of incidence.

Imperialism and state creation provide another dimension to the phenomenon and incidence of internal war. The last two hundred years has seen two major waves of decolonization, and the collapse and breakup of several land empires. The transformation of the membership of the international system from empires to nation-states – and thereby from about 40 members to almost 200 – ought to have a significant effect on our understanding of the broadest patterns of internal war incidence. After all, more states intuitively means more opportunities for internal wars. New states that have yet to consolidate their political identity, structures, and parties may also contribute to the rate of onset, if not through the weakness of new domestic institutions, then through being perceived as newly “in play” objects of international political competition.<sup>4</sup> Insofar as colonial rebellions are also wars over sovereignty internal to a state, investigating colonial conflicts will shed light on the patterns of internal war. If historical periods dominated by colonial empires saw low levels of internal wars, it could be that internal conflict is being “hidden” by being categorized as colonial rather than civil war.

Beyond the broad patterns of incidence, the character of internal war is defined by another set of variables that capture the intensity of civil conflicts and the international politics surrounding civil wars: battle deaths, ideology, intervention, the new state regime, and the type of terminations. Battle deaths could be affected by numerous factors, including duration, weapons and medical technology,<sup>5</sup> the intensity of the political grievances and security dilemma,<sup>6</sup> and the overall population of the country. Ideologies of revolution – predominantly liberalism in the 1800s, and Marxism in the 1900s – may frame grievances, inspire revolution,

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<sup>4</sup> On consolidation of political institutions and parties, see Huntington (1968).

<sup>5</sup> On medical technology and battle deaths, see Fazal (2014).

<sup>6</sup> On ethnicity and the security dilemma, see Posen (1993).

intensify conflicts, garner support from ideologically affiliated states, and act as a barrier to negotiated peace. Direct intervention by external states is a significant indicator of the international political importance of an internal war's outcome. Intervention may affect the war's duration, battle deaths, and termination type, and it may be spurred by a great power's interest in the country, a great power's competition with other great powers, an ideological affiliation with a faction in the civil war, or by humanitarian concerns. And, to manage imperialism and intervention, great powers may attempt to enforce rules regarding new states as objects of international contestation. Finally, the manner in which conflicts are terminated – military victory or some form of negotiated peace or ceasefire – tells us both about the intensity of the conflict and about the ability of the international community to mediate.

The pattern and character of internal war over the past two hundred years varies considerably. These aspects of internal war are not solely driven by factors internal to the countries suffering civil conflict. A politically and historically significant part of the variation comes from the structure of the international system. As international politics has changed, internal war has changed along with it.

## **System Theory**

This section explains what advantages system theory gives us in the study of international politics, how the structures of the system work to constrain actors' behavior, and which structures constitute the international system. It then explains in more detail how the distribution of power structures international politics and interventions.

System theory allows us to more rigorously determine how much of the character of internal war is driven by international politics relative to internal politics. International politics

is an area of study distinct from domestic politics.<sup>7</sup> If it were not, one could determine each state's foreign policies by looking to the state's domestic politics, discerning their values, interests, and priorities. But international politics produces state behaviors, strategies, practices, and outcomes that are often counterintuitive. System theory asserts that these patterns of behavior are best explained not by the internal politics of states, but by the constraints states face simply by virtue of being one among many strategically interacting sovereign states.<sup>8</sup>

A 'system' is constituted by 'structure,' specifically structures that define who the principal actors are and how they are arranged relative to one another. A system comes into existence through the interaction of actors, but once in existence has structural features that lie outside the ability of the actors to change simply by a change in behavior or identity.<sup>9</sup> The structures of international politics come from the arrangement or positioning of the actors relative to each other, rather than from their character or behavior. In this way, structures can be thought of as constraints on or selectors of behavior in international relations. These constraints impose proclivities toward the behavioral regularities that give international arena some of its distinguishing characteristics. Changes to structure can alter the feasibility of

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<sup>7</sup> Hobbes made this point, but focused on the differences in order and morality, rather than the analytical difference. Hobbes (1994), I.xiii.6–9. Both Hans Morgenthau and Carl Schmitt argued that 'the political' ought to be considered a sphere separate from other spheres of human activity: religious, moral, ethical, cultural, educational, economic, legal, scientific. Morgenthau (2012). Morgenthau (1993). Schmitt (2007b). If the system (or society) of sovereign states does not have characteristics of its own, differentiable from a summation of the foreign policies of the members of the system, then there is no warrant for 'international relations' as a distinct field of study.

<sup>8</sup> Waltz (1979). Jervis (1997). See also, Wendt on holism: Wendt (1999), pp. 26–27.

<sup>9</sup> Wendt, and constructivists more broadly, argue that because both the units of the international system (states) and the international system itself (as a 'secondary society' of states) are social constructions, that change to, transcendence of, or emancipation from the supposedly timeless verities of international politics may be more possible than realists allow for. Nevertheless, even for Wendt the strongly held intersubjective beliefs that constitute the system are not trivial for individual actors to alter simply through changes to foreign policy, institutional practices, or identity. Moreover, Wendt holds that the macro-structural character of the system typically supervenes on the micro-structural bilateral relations between actors. Wendt (1999), Chapters 4 & 7.

different foreign policies—a course of action that would be feasible and successful under one structural condition would yield a dramatically different result under within a structure. The heterogeneity of actors’ political regimes, economic organizations, ethno-religious compositions, cultures, histories, geographies, ideologies, and aspirations are excluded from structure.<sup>10</sup> A systemic approach can shed light on regularities in behavior and outcomes that emerge despite a wide variety of foreign policies and national identities. Without a system-level theory, the uniqueness of specific internal wars cannot be satisfactorily distinguished from the broader commonalities that characterize internal wars in different historical periods.

One must avoid the common error of reducing all of international politics to systemic structure. The mistake made by many neorealists following Waltz has been to place too much on polarity and anarchy as explanations, ignoring the broader content and substance of international politics. A more appropriate use of Waltz is not to conflate international politics with structure, or even the strategic content of international politics with structure. Rather we should treat structure as just that: the elements that structure or constrain the substance of international politics, whether it is strategic, economic, ideational, or institutional.

Kenneth Waltz defines the international system with three structures:

1. The state as the constitutive actor of international politics;<sup>11</sup>
2. Anarchy as the principle of organization between states;<sup>12</sup> and,

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<sup>10</sup> Waltz (1990), pp. 22–23, 25–26; Waltz (1997), p. 913; Waltz (1979), pp. 7, 10 31, 39–40, 44–46, 73, 80.

<sup>11</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 93–97.

<sup>12</sup> Waltz explains that the best way to understand his anarchy–hierarchy ordering principle is by analogy with Émile Durkheim’s distinction between mechanical and organic societies, from his 1893 *Division of Labor in Society*. Waltz (1979), pp. 88–93, 115. For critiques of Waltz’s employment of Durkheim, see: Ruggie (1983); and, Barkdull (1995).

Waltz illustrates the character of states in anarchy using Thomas Hobbes’ description of the ‘state of nature’ and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ‘stag hunt’ metaphor. Waltz (1954), Chapter 6. Hobbes (1994), l.xiii–xiv. Hobbes (1998), Preface.14, I.10, V.1–5. Rousseau (1964), p. 145. Most international relations scholarship attributes

### 3. The distribution of capabilities across the states in the system.<sup>13</sup>

The structure that does the most explanatory work in Waltz's theory is the distribution of power: changing the number of great powers has important effects for the type of order that emerges within anarchy.<sup>14</sup> Polarity is the rough measure of the number of great powers in the system.<sup>15</sup>

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Waltz's 'third image' of anarchy to Hobbes – to the exclusion of Rousseau – and those that use game theory typically model a "Hobbesian" anarchy using the 'prisoner's dilemma.' See, for example, Doyle (1997), Chapter 3 and Wendt (1999), Chapter 6. However, the majority of Waltz's discussion of the third image in *Man, the State, and War* centers of Rousseau's metaphor (also compare Waltz with Rousseau's fragments on international relations, Rousseau (2005)).

Whereas the prisoner's dilemma is asocial and does not feature the 'shadow of the future' (one or both of the accused end up imprisoned), the stag hunt is social and does imply that the game is repeated. (In the iterated prisoner's dilemma, if the probability of iteration is 50+% – i.e. the shadow of the future – then the payoff structure of the prisoner's dilemma changes such that it is transformed into the payoff structure of the stag hunt. Skyrms (2001), p. 19n7.) Because the prisoner's dilemma features a clear dominant strategy and only one equilibrium, one of the central features of anarchy, uncertainty, is not present to the degree that it is in the stag hunt, where there are multiple equilibria and a wider range strategic uncertainty conditions actors' decision-making. Whereas the prisoner's dilemma is payoff dominant, the stag hunt is risk dominant: even when cooperation is objectively better than defection, cooperation can still fail due to uncertainty. Like Rousseau's work, Waltz's conception of states in anarchy is about the struggles of the individual (no matter how virtuous initially) within a corrupting and unequal society. Individual needs for security and sustenance exist in tension with *and because of* the condition of mutual dependence.

<sup>13</sup> Waltz argues that the distribution of capabilities across the units is principally about 'power.' States are functionally-like units because of the self-help logic of anarchy. Distinguishing between units within the system is thus not a qualitative distinction—one does not need to theorize different competencies for different units, because all states strive to perform the same set of competencies. Competition, socialization, and selection keep all states relatively like in the functions they perform. Therefore, examining the capabilities of the units in the system is a mostly quantitative and distributional task. Power, as an aggregate measure of the resources of a state and its ability to employ them in its interests, is a systemic characteristic because the power of one unit is meaningful only relative to the power of other units. Waltz (1979), pp. 97–99.

<sup>14</sup> Instead of a broad equality across all states in international politics, Waltz asserts that, "international politics is mostly about inequalities." The most powerful states are usually the major actors, and the structure of the system is defined relative to the most important among the units comprising it. The great powers are "producers" of security, in the limited sense that they are most capable of securing themselves and their allies, whereas the other units in the system are "consumers" of security. Like an oligopolistic market wherein a few large firms can act as 'price setters' for the rest, the determinants of war and peace are set by the great powers. In the context of his argument, Waltz was talking about the European states within bipolarity—they no longer controlled their own means of preservation in the face of superpower predominance. But his argument applies more broadly to the relationship of the security-providing great powers of any era to the security-consuming other states and internal war factions comprising the rest of the system. Waltz (1979), pp. 70, 94, 131–132.

<sup>15</sup> Waltz almost dismisses the problem of determining polarity as a trivial exercise in counting, a task which is in most periods of history subject to wide agreement. He asserts that polarity only finds confusion when the definition of relevant capabilities is unclear, pointing toward the importance of understanding the *composition* of power, not just the *distribution* of power. Waltz (1979), p. 130. On composition of power, see Deudney (1993), Deudney (1995a), and Deudney (2000)).



Waltz argues that a bipolar system will be more stable than a multipolar system. Systemic changes, like the shift from multipolarity to bipolarity, change our expectations of unit behavior and of the outcomes that their interactions will produce.<sup>16</sup> The strategic behavior of security-seeking actors can change as the number of relevant powers that they must plan around changes. The distribution of power should also structure the strategic behavior of internal war factions, especially those seeking support from the external powers most capable of projecting power. Thus, the polarity of the system should have important effects on the perceived strategic value of intervention into peripheral states.

But, since the object of our investigation is different from Waltz—internal war rather than interstate war—the structuring effects of different polarities should diverge from those investigated in *Theory of International Politics*. The novel position taken by this dissertation is that the structural effects of polarity on core–periphery relations are generally the opposite of the structural effects of polarity on great power relations. Waltz sees bipolarity as stabilizing for the two superpowers, but this study finds that it is *destabilizing* for core–periphery relations. Waltz argues that great power relations in multipolarity are complex and prone to miscalculation, but we argue that between great powers and peripheral actors multipolarity exhibits more formally stable relationships.

As the distribution of power changes—not just among the great powers but system-wide—the conditions of possibility for intervention change.<sup>17</sup> It is in this sense that political

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<sup>16</sup> Waltz (1979), p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> Waltz argues that given the structural irrelevance of peripheral countries that the United States has over-managed world affairs since World War II. Two factors related to polarity contribute to this over-management. First, as the concentration of power in the great power sub-system increases—going from multipolarity to bipolarity in this case—the polar powers can afford to be less concerned with shepherding their resources and

scientists analyzing third world relations with the superpowers during the Cold War frequently called intervention a structural feature of international politics.<sup>18</sup> While explanations centering on relative power alone are too general to explain the patterns of imperialism or intervention, they do serve to describe how and why external powers are capable of having a significant effect on internal wars. Disparities in power have an effect on the strategic context faced by every state in the system, weak or strong.<sup>19</sup> Just as the ever-present threat of war underlies Waltz's vision of the relations between great powers,<sup>20</sup> the constant possibility of intervention forms the context within which most states operate. By making intervention possible, the inequality of the distribution of power structures states' concerns, interests, and behavior, without requiring that intervention is either imminent or occurring.

### *SUMMARY*

The system structural approach gives us a way to distinguish between outcomes driven by the unique characteristics of states or factions and outcomes driven by the constraining structures of the system of states. The distribution of power constrains the behavior of great powers and internal factions alike, producing broad patterns in internal war through history.

The following three sections of this chapter will investigate how polarity structures the relationship between the great powers and the peripheries and by what mechanisms polarity has this effect. First, we will examine the strategic interests for great powers and internal factions in

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capabilities, given the wider margin between the polar powers and their potential challengers. The larger margin then leads to more frequent adventurism in the periphery. Waltz (1979), pp. 205, 207.

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Bull (1984), p. 135, and Windsor (1984), p. 46. For a post-Cold War study making the claim that "external support for non-core groups is an inherent feature of the international system," see Mylonas (2012), p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Doyle (1986), pp. 26, 75, 125.

<sup>20</sup> This vision of an ever-present threat of the use of force is part of the broader realist tradition, not unique to Waltz. See, for example, Hobbes (1994), Morgenthau (1993), and Aron (1967) among many others.

the outcomes of internal wars. Second, we will elucidate the effect of transnational political ideology on internal wars, and how polarity changes the effect of ideology. A third, we will explore the institution of sovereignty as it is related to internal wars, and as it is affected by the shifting distribution of power.

## **Polarity, interests, and internal war**

This is the first of three sections detailing how polarity structures the content of international politics. This section examines polarity's effect on the strategic interests of great powers and internal factions. The first half describes the interests that great powers have in the periphery, and the interests that factions involved in civil conflict have in the great powers. The second half explains the fundamental assumptions about polarity's effect on these interests, and the most important features of the different polarities. It then applies the features of different polarities to explain how the distribution of power structures the interests of great powers and internal factions. The effect of structure on interests shapes internal war patterns of intervention, duration, and termination. Finally, it assesses whether changes in great power behavior toward the periphery are more likely to have been caused by shifts in polarity or by the introduction of nuclear weapons.

The distribution of power structures the strategic and security interests of the external powers gauging the stakes of an internal war. Because all actors are part of a larger strategic context, their actions will often be dependent on or anticipate the strategies and behaviors of other actors.<sup>21</sup> As the context changes – in this case, as the distribution of power shifts – the actors' interests and the strategies considered viable will also change. External actors weighing

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<sup>21</sup> Jervis (1997), pp. 44, 55.

the stakes involved in an internal war will act not only on their interests inherent in the state undergoing the internal war but will also act on the internal war's meaning in the larger balance of international politics.

International relations theorists and diplomatic historians have extensively examined the relationship of great powers to 'peripheries' and 'buffer states.' Whether considering the role of the Balkans in European history, or of Poland since the late 1700s, or of imperial powers "carving the melon" of China or "scrambling" for Africa, there is a clear pattern of the powerful extending their influence into power vacuums, regions of weak states, and contested buffer states. Robinson & Gallagher explored the logic of Africa's conquest, arguing that instability and weakness in the peripheries spurred a vicious cycle of colonization when upheaval threatened either the existing interests of a great power or the relative balance between the colonial powers. African lands were largely perceived as economically unattractive for colonization, but the structure of security competition in anarchy created a strategic pressure to expand regardless of the expectation of poor economic returns.<sup>22</sup> Likewise, Jakub Grygiel argues that the same logic is present today with respect to great power involvement in 'failed states.' The threat of a failed state is not just to its people or neighbors, but also arises from the temptation for great powers to compete in influencing the outcome of any internal contest for power. Denying rival powers influence may be just as important as the ability to intervene on behalf of domestic order.<sup>23</sup>

Michael Desch places great power interests in peripheral states into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. States that are intrinsically important to great powers are those that can

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<sup>22</sup> Robinson & Gallagher (1961).

<sup>23</sup> Grygiel (2009).

directly contribute to the strategic balance, either through their regional military capabilities or their control of strategically important locations.<sup>24</sup> The alignment of intrinsically valuable states is a central part of the security calculations of great powers. Control over the resources or foreign policies of weaker states is an extension of the autarky preference of the great powers—control and self-sufficiency are surer means to security.<sup>25</sup> Military competition over Third World alignment sharpens the interests of external powers in the peripheries, especially when an internal war has the potential to result in a change of alignment. External states will use arms sales, logistical, intelligence, and training support, and sometimes direct intervention in order to secure or switch the alignment of a country. The demonstration effect of securing a regime or overthrowing a regime can often produce alignment effects beyond solely the targeted country, inducing other leaders to bandwagon with the external power most likely to keep them in power against internal threats.<sup>26</sup>

States that are extrinsically important to great powers are those that do not have intrinsic value, rather they are valued as a result of the rivalries between great powers.<sup>27</sup> In this sense, extrinsic value is imbued by the structure of conflict or competition. In the absence of core conflict, or if that conflict were to change substantially, these places and peoples would no longer be valued as instrumental or symbolic objects.

Like Robinson & Gallagher's argument about the extension of imperial interests – the vicious cycle of conquering new land in order to secure existing holdings, only to then justify

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<sup>24</sup> Desch (1989), pp. 97–98; and, Desch (1996b), p. 369

<sup>25</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 106, 131–132.

<sup>26</sup> David labels this behavior 'omnibalancing' to distinguish it from theories of balancing or bandwagoning that solely take into account international threats. David (1989), pp. 61–62.

<sup>27</sup> Desch (1989); Desch (1996a); Desch (1996b); Desch (1993); and, Mylonas (2012), p. 33.

conquering more land to secure the empire's now expanded borders<sup>28</sup> – Desch argues that states identify extrinsic interests in areas proximate to their other strategic holdings. Defending lines of attack and lines of communication expands the security interests of states into peripheral areas.<sup>29</sup> Further expanding the scope of a great power's interests, extrinsically valuable states can often pose a threat to an external power's bases and allies, not only in its strength but also in the chaos that often accompanies internal conflicts. Insurgency, guerilla warfare, terrorism, sabotage, organized crime, arms and other trafficking, and refugee flows can endanger the military bases of great powers or their regional allies.

Just as polarity has a structuring effect on great powers, polarity also determines the constraints and opportunities faced by factions involved in (or planning) an internal war. Both governments and rebels have a strategic interest in attracting support from external powers.<sup>30</sup> The more external powers with the force projection capability and interest to support a faction, the greater the freedom of maneuver the faction has in appealing for assistance.<sup>31</sup> The greater the political leverage possessed by an internal faction, the more the client will be able to free ride and threaten to switch patrons.

In sum, both internal and external actors have significant strategic and security interests in each other. Internal actors have a security interest in attracting external support for their side of a conflict, and the number of powers possessing the capability to extend support affects the political freedom of the internal actors in securing that support. External actors have strategic interests sometimes inherent in countries undergoing internal war, sometimes created simply by

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<sup>28</sup> Robinson & Gallagher (1961).

<sup>29</sup> Desch (1989), pp. 98–99.

<sup>30</sup> Mylonas (2012), pp. 28–29.

<sup>31</sup> Waltz (1979), p. 174.

the fact of competition with other great powers. The stakes external powers perceive in the outcome of an internal war, whether a change of alignment or the loss of a market, can be substantially affected by the broader strategic context of the international distribution of power. Next we will examine why the number of great powers produces different proclivities or constraints on the behavior of both internal factions and the polar powers. These different structural constraints should have knock-on effects for the character of internal war.

### *POLARITY, CONFLICT & COMPLEXITY*

This theory relies on three core assumptions about polarity and its effects on international politics:

1. Polarity structures not only relations between great powers, but also relations between the great powers and the periphery;
2. Different polarities feature either inherent conflict or potential conflict;<sup>32</sup> and,
3. Different polarities feature varying levels of complexity and opacity when discerning who stands to gain from a given event in international politics.<sup>33</sup>

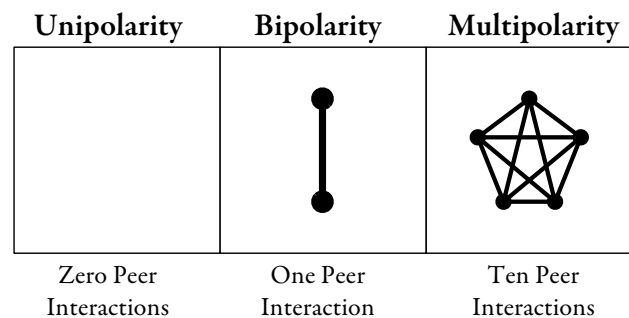
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<sup>32</sup> “Peace, *n*. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.” Bierce (1960), p. 155. Hobbes described the ‘state of war’ between sovereigns as similar to the ‘state of nature’ between individuals: “...in all times kings and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies and in the state and posture of gladiators, having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another ... which is a posture of war.” Hobbes (1994), I.xiii.12. The state of conflict or preparation for conflict between plural political powers extends back to Classical thinkers: “*Si vis pacem, para bellum*” comes from Vegetius’ *De Re Militari* (3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> C. AD), Book III, while a similar statement appears much earlier in Plato’s final dialogue, *Laws* (4<sup>th</sup> C. BC), I.628.c9–e1.

<sup>33</sup> “Fidelity, *n*. A virtue peculiar to those who are about to be betrayed.” Bierce (1960), p. 64. Concern about relative gains and cheating takes a central place in realist theory. See this exchange for example: Mearsheimer (1994/1995), Keohane & Martin (1995), and Mearsheimer (1995). Game theorists have modeled problems of coordination in pursuit of gains extensively. One-off models often have clearly dominant strategies. But in *n*–player repeated games, the role of complexity, uncertainty, reputation, and noise make it very difficult to discern a dominant strategy. For a brief overview of misperception and uncertainty in game theory as a way to understand structural realism, see Doyle (1997), Chapter 3. On games that incorporate relative gains and the specter of war to better model Waltz, see Powell (1991).

First, the polarity of the international system structures the relationship of internal war to international politics. As discussed above, Waltz argues that polarity can have a significant effect on the operation of the balance of power and the management of international affairs between great powers. However, polarity should also affect how great powers and peripheries interact. The three key features are ‘inherent core conflict,’ ‘core complexity,’ and ‘valence of outcomes.’

Second, the number of great powers shapes the potential for conflict and the scope of great power interests. Multipolar and bipolar distributions of power contain an ever-present



possibility of conflict between peer competitors, whether an outright great power war or a tense cold war. The conflict inherent in bipolarity is sharper than in multipolarity, because attention is diffused to a greater degree in multipolarity.<sup>34</sup> Unipolarity is not structurally conflictual, but rather contains the possibility of the rise of a peer competitor in the future.<sup>35</sup> Internal war occurring within different polarities will be subject to different international influences.

Depending on the level of conflict inherent in the structure of the system, the stakes the great powers perceive in the outcomes of internal wars will be higher or lower.<sup>36</sup>

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Conflict inherent	Medium	High	Low

<sup>34</sup> Deutsch & Singer (1964), pp. 396–400.

<sup>35</sup> Wohlforth (1999).

<sup>36</sup> Vincent (1974), pp. 49–59; and Finnemore (2003), pp. 64–65, 80.



Third, polarity determines how many great powers could benefit or lose from any given international event. Different numbers of great powers can change how internationally significant events are perceived, evaluated, and weighed strategically. Determining which great power might clearly benefit from any given event changes as the number of great powers changes. With both multipolar and unipolar distributions of power the ‘valence’ of any particular gain is not necessarily going to be clear.<sup>37</sup> When there are many great powers, events may help or hurt multiple great powers, and even events that clearly benefit or harm the relative position of one great power may not affect the overall balance between flexible alliance blocs. Within unipolarity, even if an event seems contrary to the interests of the superpower, it is not clear that a rising power will gain decisively from that event. Bipolarity structures international politics such that there is greater clarity in terms of the valence of gains and losses. While perhaps not perfectly zero-sum, it is generally easier to tell which superpower stands to benefit from an event.<sup>38</sup> Internal war is often a significant event that great powers must weigh in terms of their interests and the potential for their strategic rivals to gain from. The distribution of power alters how the stakes of internal war are perceived and calculated.

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Core complexity	High	Low	Low
Valence of events	Unclear	Clear	Unclear

### *POLARITY & INTERESTS*

These three basic features of polarity – inherent conflict, core complexity, and valence of outcomes – have secondary effects on the options open to peripheral actors. These effects structure the behavior of great powers toward the periphery, including their stability/instability preference and mode of intervention. The result is that different polarities will feature internal wars that can be differentiated by their intervention type, duration, and termination type.

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<sup>37</sup> Here ‘valence’ refers to the strategic meaning of an outcome; events have the potential to contribute to one or many core states’ interests.

<sup>38</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 171–172; and, Jervis (1997), p. 121.

### **Internal faction freedom of maneuver**

The political freedom of maneuver for internal factions engaging in a civil conflict is structured by the distribution of power. With a greater number of potential sponsors or affiliates, internal factions (whether rebels or governments) have greater choice and bargaining power when aligning with an external power.<sup>39</sup> Internal war offers factions the possibility of alignment or realignment in exchange for support in their struggle for domestic sovereignty, but the structure of the system plays a role in constraining the effectiveness and possibilities for political opportunism.

It is important to emphasize the agency of internal factions. Overly system-dominant theories, such as dependency theory, too often fall into arguing that the system determines both the internal and external behavior of peripheral states, unrealistically underestimating the autonomy of weak states.<sup>40</sup> In fact, external sponsors are usually reactive rather than proactive in engaging peripheral countries. Third World states actively seek assistance in facing their challenges, while superpowers compete to meet or respond to the Third World's agenda (if they have an interest in gaining the state's alignment). In most cases, the initiating party in a realignment has been the Third World leader rather than the superpower, while the superpower played a reactive role in providing support once an opening appeared.<sup>41</sup>

The number of polar powers determines the extent of the choices open to peripheral actors in seeking alliances, aid, or other support. A greater number of powers may lead to wider range of choice and potential action for non-great powers seeking security or pursuing their

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<sup>39</sup> Waltz (1979), p. 174.

<sup>40</sup> Jervis (1997), pp. 102–103.

<sup>41</sup> David (1991a), pp. 20–21, 198–199.

interests.<sup>42</sup> Bipolarity should reduce the freedom of action of peripheral states, by making the choice of allegiance Manichaean, and raising the stakes and opportunity costs of committing or switching sides.<sup>43</sup> Unipolarity features even less freedom of maneuver for peripheral states, with even fewer opportunities to secure external backing than one might expect, as the remaining superpower has less need to cultivate regional proxies or policemen.<sup>44</sup>

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Conflict inherent	Medium	High	Low
Core complexity	High	Low	Low
<b>Freedom of maneuver</b>	High	Medium	Low

### Periphery relationship, intervention, duration, and termination

The conflict and complexity inherent in the distribution of power affects the relationship of great powers toward the periphery, the dominant type of intervention pursued by great powers, and the conditions of possibility for different types of internal war terminations. The distribution of power structures great power interests and the stakes they

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<sup>42</sup> Doyle (1986), p. 136.

<sup>43</sup> Both Waltz and Jervis take the opposite position, arguing that the stalemate between competing superpowers that characterizes bipolarity (as contrasted with multipolarity) frees smaller states to engage both sides to search for a better deal. Jervis makes the case that common defense of a bloc is a public good (i.e. non-excludable, non-rivalrous), and therefore smaller states can free ride on the superpower and act irresponsibly. Waltz (1979), pp. 174, 185. Jervis (1997), p. 117. Walt (2011), pp. 112–113.

However, both Waltz and Jervis are discussing small state alliance/alignment when the government's hold on sovereignty is not seriously challenged. But states undergoing internal war face a very different security environment: while national security is normally considered a non-rivalrous good, during the extreme partisanship of a civil war security provision becomes a rivalrous good (i.e. a good whose consumption by one actor prevents simultaneous consumption by other actor); on the zero-sum nature of security provision following the collapse of central authority, see Posen (1993) and Engerer (2011), p. 139. Rivalrous, non-excludable goods are not public goods but common goods. Public goods come with the pitfalls underprovision due to free riding, but common goods suffer from the 'tragedy of the commons' in which the proclivity toward overprovision/overconsumption is ruinous. Rissman (2012), pp. 8, 71, 92. Deudney (1995b), 97–98.

During a civil war, increased security for one side means decreased security for the other, and cooperation between the warring sides on the provision of security is as unlikely as it is disadvantageous. It is not defection (free riding, underprovision) that characterizes factional freedom of maneuver in internal wars; rather it is uncontrolled escalation (tragedy of the commons, overprovision/overconsumption) that characterizes the pathological behavior of client factions that patron external powers must be wary of.

Both multipolarity and bipolarity, as inherently conflictual structures, suffer from overprovision/overconsumption. It is only during unipolarity, which is not structurally conflictual, that security operates like a non-rivalrous public good and suffers from free riding and chronic underprovision.

<sup>44</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 179. Walt (2011), pp. 113–114.

perceive in the outcomes of events in the periphery. Great powers will weigh the stakes and threshold for intervention, not just in terms of their intrinsic interests in the peripheral state, but also with respect to their extrinsic interests as they are shaped by the international balance of power and the potential strategic reactions of rival great powers.

The difficulty of managing complex, flexible, and shifting alliances among great powers leads conversely to a stability preference in the peripheries. Great powers tend to intervene on the side of the state (multilaterally if multiple powers are intervening), against rebels, favoring the imposition of a quick military resolution. The clearer but sharper relationship between two superpowers leads to the opposite: core instability is exported to the peripheries in the form of proxy conflicts. The superpowers engage in counterintervention, and their support for factions on both sides of a conflict usually lengthens the war's duration and forecloses any negotiated terminations.<sup>45</sup> A sole superpower manages a system of potential future conflict, simplified by lack of present peer competitors, but made uncertain by the unclear valence of events or outcomes in the periphery. The result is superpower disengagement, manifested through withdrawal, intervention at arms length, or intervention mediated through institutions or coalitions.<sup>46</sup> However, the lack of core conflict changes the conditions of possibility for conflict termination, making negotiated terminations possible.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Hironaka, pp. 26, 56. Westad (2007).

<sup>46</sup> "[B]y identifying a major and overlooked process of transformation of civil wars, we are able to theorize the link between system polarity, the Cold War, and internal conflict, as well as provide empirical support for it. The way in which civil wars are waged turns out to be clearly related to the international system in ways that are more obvious (e.g., superpower interference) or less (e.g., the decline of irregular war). The prevalence of irregular war as a means of waging civil wars turns out to be a phenomenon closely associated with the Cold War. Conversely, [symmetric nonconventional] wars are associated with processes of superpower withdrawal from weak states following the end of the Cold War, whereas conventional war are associated with processes of imperial collapse and state formation. ...[J]ust because they are domestic conflicts, civil wars are no less immune to the effects of the international system than interstate wars." Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), pp. 427–428

<sup>47</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), pp. 426–427.

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Conflict inherent	Medium	High	Low
Core complexity	High	Low	Low
Valence of events	Unclear	Clear	Unclear
Freedom of maneuver	High	Medium	Low
<b>Periphery relationship</b>	Stability preference	Instability export	Disengagement
<b>Intervention type</b>	Antirevolutionary, multilateral	Counterintervention	Arms-length, mediated
<b>Duration</b>	Shorter	Longer	Indeterminate
<b>Termination type</b>	Military	Military	Negotiated

### *NUCLEAR WEAPONS & STRUCTURE*

One major factor changing the dynamic of conflict between great powers is the advent of nuclear weapons, which might be considered a structural factor distinct from the distribution of power or even a “unit veto” on systemic structure.<sup>48</sup> Competition between nuclear-armed states is theorized to have two effects distinct from competition between non-nuclear states. First, because of the profound implications of nuclear weapons for state security, two nuclear states will place a premium on avoiding an actual resort to war. Second, because the possession of nuclear weapons does not remove the issues of contention between the two states, their conflicts will be externalized into proxy wars or competitions for influence in peripheral areas. So while nuclear weapons may increase core security, they may also serve to increase peripheral insecurity. Glenn Snyder termed this the “stability–instability paradox.”<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, the effect of nuclear weapons does not mark a sea change in core-periphery relations. We can compare pre-nuclear multipolarity to nuclear bipolarity to see if the introduction of nuclear weapons made a dramatic change, and we can also compare nuclear bipolarity to nuclear unipolarity to see if the distribution of power changed the effect of the nuclear “unit veto.”

<sup>48</sup> Deudney (2007), Chapter 9. Waltz (1998), p. 374. Waltz (1981). Monteiro (2014), p. 97n57.

<sup>49</sup> Snyder (1965). Jervis (1989), Chapter 1, esp. pp. 19–22, 35. Deudney (2011), pp. 290–291.

Great powers intervened throughout the periphery before the advent of nuclear weapons, and the superpowers continued to intervene in the Third World after the development of nuclear weapons. It is implausible that in the absence of nuclear weapons the superpowers would have lessened superpower intervention in peripheral countries. As will be shown in the next chapter, the rate of great power activity in the peripheries remained essentially constant across multipolarity and bipolarity.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, it does appear that achieving nuclear parity with the United States was a key development enabling Khrushchev to safely push into the Third World.<sup>51</sup> But even if internal war onsets and interventions remained fairly constant across multipolarity to bipolarity, duration did dramatically rise during bipolarity. The change in duration was most likely due to the change in intervention: anti-revolutionary and multilateral during multipolarity, but counterintervention during bipolarity. It is difficult to disentangle whether this change to the modes of intervention is being caused by polarity, nuclear weapons, or by another unspecified causal factor. But if the consensus effect of nuclear weapons is to induce great powers to avoid confrontations that would escalate to direct conflict, we would expect to have seen Cold War superpower bilateral

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<sup>50</sup> Betts argued that nuclear weapons reinforced the stability of core relations, but did not appreciably change core-periphery relations:

[T]heir interests in most parts of the Third World are distinctly less than in the core area of confrontation. This means they have not explicitly posed threats of escalation that dramatically raise the stakes of conventional military engagement. This reduces the risks from limited uses of force, which is good where such conventional action is deemed legitimate and desirable. Because the legitimacy of intervention or non-intervention is far less established or mutually recognized than in the core area, and because the political volatility in many regions precludes confidence that limited use of force can be both quick and decisive, however, the danger of miscalculation and accidental escalation is higher. The stability of the core, in fact, bears some relation to the danger of great power conflict on the periphery. As European rivalries in the nineteenth century were displaced to the scramble for colonies, so are the ideological contest and attempts to maintain a global balance of power today displaced to the scramble for influence in the Third World." Betts (1987), p. 93.

Also arguing for a historical continuity between European colonial interventions and Cold War interventions, see Westad (2007), p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Westad (2007), pp. 68–72.

cooperation (perhaps even condominium) to avoid such an outcome, whereas the lack of nuclear weapons during multipolarity ought to have allowed for military counter-action rather than the Concert. Yet the opposite obtained.

We can turn then to the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity in an attempt to see if nuclear weapons had a constant influence. Yet, one can see that nuclear weapons have a different effect within a bipolar structure than within a unipolar structure—the former saw the superpowers exporting their conflict to a non-nuclear arena through proxy wars, whereas the latter sees no structural incentive for exporting conflict to peripheral areas, and no reticence to intervene for fear of escalation (although the rate of intervention declined slightly from bipolarity to unipolarity: 29% to 23%).<sup>52</sup> And strictly in terms of the ability to intervene, the change from two superpowers capable of shaping the periphery to just one superpower capable of intervening globally in its interests is of substantial political import.<sup>53</sup> The changing distribution of power altered the meaning of nuclear weapons.

While nuclear weapons have played a potentially revolutionary role in great power relations, it is unclear that they play a significant role in structuring core–periphery relations, except in creating a core interest in non-proliferation. External powers have an interest in preventing proliferation in order to preserve the structural inequality that makes intervention possible, and in order to preserve a broader regional stability, free from destabilizing arms races,

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<sup>52</sup> Deudney (2011), pp. 290–292. For data on the rate of intervention, see the next chapter. For a statistical test weighing polarity’s explanatory power against the nuclear taboo in determining the effect of nuclear weapons on militarized interstate disputes, see Kroenig & Weintraub (2011).

<sup>53</sup> “The United States possesses significant conventional power preponderance, giving it great freedom of action vis-à-vis non-nuclear states – a freedom of action that is incomparably great than that possessed by any other nuclear powers, which do not possess power-projection capabilities commensurate with those of the United States. The unique power-projection capabilities of the United States make the world unipolar despite the presence of other nuclear powers, giving polarity continued importance in shaping international politics.” Monteiro (2014), p. 94.

nuclear exchanges breaking the nuclear taboo, and the possibilities of leakage to terrorists or accidental launches in weak or civil warring states.<sup>54</sup>

### *SUMMARY*

The foregoing has explained the ways in which the structure of the system constrains the interests of great powers and internal factions alike—different polarities produce different dynamics between states weighing intervention and partisans appealing for external support. Great powers are not only interested in states undergoing upheaval because of an intrinsic interest in the country, but may also value the state as an object in their struggle against other great powers.

The central structural characteristics distinguishing different polarities are the degree to which conflict is inherent in the structure, the complexity of relations between great powers, and the concomitant difficulty in determining which power will benefit from outcomes in the periphery and to what degree.

Flowing from these structural characteristics, are: the freedom of maneuver possessed by peripheral actors seeking support or attempting to play the great powers off of one another; the stabilizing, destabilizing, or disengaged relationship of the polar powers to the periphery; and the resultant mode of intervention reflecting that relationship. The character of internal war is structured most directly in its duration and the type of termination possible.

Finally, the advent of nuclear weapons has had a clear effect on the possibility of war between nuclear states. But it has had less decisive an effect on the manner in which international politics structures the character of internal war. The concentration of conventional power projection capabilities still appears to matter greatly in core–periphery

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<sup>54</sup> Deudney (2011), pp. 307–309. David (1989), pp. 69–72; and, David (1992–1993), pp. 144–148.



relations, and the changing character of internal war from bipolarity to unipolarity indicates that while nuclear weapons may have changed international politics, structure nevertheless plays an important role in explaining the changes in a way that the constant presence of nuclear weapons cannot.

Far from structuring only the strategic interests of states and factions, polarity also structures other facets of international politics. The next two sections describe how the distribution of power affects the meaning of ideologies for internal war, and affects the institution of imperial sovereignty and new state creation.

## **Polarity, ideologies, and internal war**

This is the second section detailing how polarity structures the content of international politics. This section examines polarity's effect on transnational political ideologies in four parts. First, the way in which ideology and system theory can work together is explained. Second, 'transnational political ideology' is defined, and the major waves of ideological upheaval over the past two hundred years are identified. Third, the manner in which ideology links great powers to internal factions and vice versa is clarified. Finally, it puts forward the expected structuring effects of polarity on the significance of ideology for the character of internal war.

### *IDEOLOGY & SYSTEM THEORY*

Post-WWII realism, including structural realism, has rightly been criticized for adopting assumptions that foreclosed its ability to tackle the religious and ideological aspects of international politics.<sup>55</sup> The dominant position of post-World War II realism has been that

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<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the tradition that contemporary realism draws from has significant and fundamental insights into the importance of internal war to international politics, and into the volatile relationship between ideological revolutionary waves and the states-system. Realism itself was formulated during episodes of internationalized

ideological contestation is reducible to a manifestation of the struggle for power, and that ideological rhetoric is opportunistic or a justification for otherwise illegitimate actions taken in the pursuit of gain. Only when a state's security and vital interests are assured can it undertake an ideologically motivated foreign policy. The most important focus of international politics is the anarchical relations between sovereign states, not the domestic politics within them.<sup>56</sup>

Recent works on ideology and its role linking internal wars with international politics – John Owen's *Clash of Ideas in World Politics*, and Mark Haas's *The Clash of Ideologies* – employ different ontologies, leading them to critique contemporary realism for its perceived deficiencies. But because of this approach, these authors do not rigorously relate the effects of ideology to the constraints imposed by the distribution of power.<sup>57</sup> While these authors treat ideology as systemic and structural, structural realism treats ideology as part of the content of national and international politics, but not part of the system's structure.<sup>58</sup> Far from being a structure constituting the international system, the international system was itself constituted

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ideological civil war and thinkers claimed by the realists take the insecurity generated by civil dissolution as their central problematic. Thucydides, Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and Carl Schmitt provided the central case for a connection between internal war, transnational ideology, and international security. Bodin and Hobbes' justifications of sovereignty described the early modern states-system as a solution to transnational religious conflict and the internationalized civil wars endemic to the period—it was the prior work on ideology and civil war that made structural realism's assumption of anarchy possible.

<sup>56</sup> Most realists from E. H. Carr through neorealism make the normative case that ideology should not determine a country's foreign policy, *and* the positive case that understanding ideology is not necessary for understanding broadly why great powers behave the way they do. See for example Carr (2001), Chapters 5 & 8; Morgenthau (1993); Waltz (1979), Chapter 9; Kennan (1984), Chapter 6; Mearsheimer (2001), pp. 46–48; and Walt (1987), although Walt (1996) places much greater importance on the role of ideology.

<sup>57</sup> Haas does introduce the concept of “ideological polarity” which counts the number of ideological groups, rather than the number of great powers. Haas (2012), p. 6. In his discussion of ideological multipolarity and bipolarity, a good portion of ideological polarity seems reducible to material polarity. The main difference seems to be that Haas could treat the early 1800s as ideologically bipolar in contrast to the 1920s–30s, which were ideologically multipolar, despite both periods being multipolar in terms of the distribution of material power.

<sup>58</sup> Owen (2010); Haas (2005); Haas (2012).

against transnational ideology.<sup>59</sup> The content of international politics ranges widely beyond straightforwardly strategic concerns, including economic, cultural, social, political, and ideological issues and interactions. But these elements of international politics are also affected by the structure of the international system, including the constraints on behavior introduced by different distributions of power.

Despite its present shortcomings, structural realism can contribute something essential to the understanding of ideology's effect on civil war. Since great power identification with ideology and sponsorship of affiliate revolutionaries and regime change abroad is important to the effect of ideology on the phenomenon of internal war, the number of great powers and their relative power balance should be important in determining the intensity of ideological polarization and the strategic stakes faced by the great powers and by internal factions. One

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<sup>59</sup> Ideological polarization played a fundamental role in justifying the states-system, in the construction of territorialized authority from the collapse of the heterogeneous medieval order, and in the subsequent theoretical justifications for the sovereignty put forward by Bodin, Hobbes, and Schmitt. Transnational religious turmoil resulted in theories justifying the emergent sovereign states-system, defined by restricting claims to authority to territorially-bounded political units. Bodin published his treatise on sovereignty in 1576, after the 1555 Peace of Augsburg had attempted a solution to the Wars of Religion through the doctrine of *cuius regio, eius religio*. Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* in 1651, after the 1648 Peace of Westphalia had attempted another solution to sectarianism as a *casus belli* for the interventions of France, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the Hapsburg Empire into the German states during the Thirty Years War. Their works, published during the formative years of the states-system and the decline of alternate locations of authority (e.g. the Catholic Church, the Holy Roman Empire, and other entities discussed by Spruyt (1994)), provided a theoretical justification for the need to limit claims of political and moral authority to the sovereign presiding over a territorially-exclusive entity. Proscribing cross-border interventions (and consequently internal appeals for external assistance) was justified by the violence of the previous 150 years. Nexon (2009), pp. 3–4, 8, 34, 99, 101, 105–106, 108–109, 120, 123, 129, 132, 281.

For Schmitt, the bracketing of violence from the mid-1600s through to WWI, excepting the punctuation of the Napoleonic Wars, was the great achievement of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*. Schmitt's 1963 *Theory of the Partisan* was focused on superpower sponsorship of revolution and counter-revolution during the Cold War, and how that sponsorship broke down the bracketing of violence. See Schmitt (2007b), Schmitt (2003), and, Schmitt (2007c).

The animating purpose of the construction of the states-system was the problem presented by political ideology, and it is the transnational aspects of ideology that tie internal *stasis* to external intervention. Not only does revisionist political ideology seek to transcend and transform the states-system, but it was also implicated in that system's very genesis. Realist theory has been wedded to the sovereign state precisely because sovereignty emerged during revolutionary waves, and realism historically argued for territorially delimited authority as a solution to the unbounded violence engendered by ideological claims to truth.

cannot understand the relationship between ideology and internal war without understanding how the structure of the system alters the effect of transnational political ideologies.

### *IDEOLOGIES & INTERNATIONAL HISTORY*

*Transnational political ideology* contributes to actors' identities, shapes their perceptions, interests, and goals (whether great powers or internal factions), and defines the orientation of those actors toward the states-system as a whole.<sup>60</sup> Further, transnational political ideology appears to have an important place in internal war: its causes, articulated grievances, intensity and character, spillover into revolutionary waves, and the ability of factions to arrive at a resolution to their conflict. Because ideology shapes a state's identity, its domestic regime type, its leaders' perceptions of threat, and their understandings of other groups' international objectives, external ideological enemies can come to be seen as inherently

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<sup>60</sup> They are explicitly *political* ideologies, defining the broadest lines of international conflict and within-group affinities. Ideologies that are apolitical or that can serve many political masters do not perform the function being explored here. For example, nationalism has been linked to republicanism in Revolutionary France, to liberalism through Woodrow Wilson, to fascism and Nazism, and even to communism in certain circumstances (e.g. Stalin's lionization of Great Russians following WWII, Mao's harnessing of Chinese peasant nationalism, and international communist support for national liberation movements). See Johnson (1962); and, Cassels (1996), p. 6. Likewise, democracy has been the rallying cry of liberals, communists, and even (for certain definitions of democracy such as "acclamation") conservatives. See Schmitt (1988), p. 24. Further, sovereignty, as an ideological construction, has itself been wedded to varied conservative and liberal concepts about the legitimate location of authority.

That these ideologies are widely transnational is important in refining our focus away from ideologies that are restricted to one country (e.g. Juche in North Korea). The ideologies investigated should be system-wide in the scope of their penetration, held by great powers and peripheral states alike. On revolutionary transnational networks, see Nexon (2009), Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), p. 420, and Haas (2012).

These ideas are more than just ideas, they are ideological. Ideology is a set of ideas that informs a worldview that highlights certain things as salient interests, that provides a normative account of how power and authority should be arranged within and between societies, and that transcends concerns arising from the parochial state of things. The modern understanding of ideology draws heavily from Marx's claim that these ideas are illusions promulgated by the powerful hoping to justify their continued rule through ignorance and falsehood. Goldie (1989), pp. 267, 270–271, 286; Marx (1978); Gramsci (2005).

In Buzan's English School schema, transnational political ideology would represent the 'world society' third of the model, alongside the 'international system' and 'international society.' Buzan (2004), pp. 9, 98.

untrustworthy and aggressive, and domestic ideological opponents as fifth columnists in a struggle for power.<sup>61</sup>

Waves of internal war have historically served as the catalyst for epochal interstate conflicts: Central European upheaval sparked the Thirty Years War; the French Revolution set the stage for the Napoleonic Wars; Yugoslav nationalist revolts began World War I while the Russian Revolution ended the Eastern theater of WWI; and, the Russian, Chinese, Korean, and Greek internal wars defined the character of the Cold War. Today, the “Color Revolutions,” the “Arab Spring,” and the threat of terrorism emanating from weak or failed states push the importance of internal war to the fore of international politics. Transnational political ideology links waves of upheaval and draws great powers into conflicts, and in many cases conflicts where their national interest is unclear.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Haas (2012), pp. 7–8, 12–13, 16. ‘Revolutionary periods’ or ‘transnational ideological polarization’ can be understood through Carl Schmitt’s friend–enemy distinction. The enemy was central to ‘the political’ as it allowed to sovereign to delineate those that lay outside the political grouping with whom conflicts were possible, and those that were inside the political grouping with whom decisive conflict was not a possibility. If domestic parties were to intensify antagonisms to the point where armed conflict was possible between them (i.e. civil war), the state would cease to exist as a coherent or common identity vis-à-vis other states. Schmitt (2007b), pp. 26–38.

Forty years later, Schmitt updated his friend–enemy concept in light of the Cold War, arguing that the bracketing of conflict to limited interstate warfare had broken down. The friend–enemy distinction no longer lay between states, but now within states, dividing them internally and linking those factions to the superpowers. Absolute enmity of revolutionary partisans transcended the relative enmity that existed between states, and absolute enmity penetrated inside the states rendering them internally incoherent. Schmitt (2007c).

John Herz came to a similar conclusion in his 1957 piece, “The Rise and Demise of the Territorial State.” One of the four factors he listed as signaling the ultimate end of the nation-state was “ideological-political penetration.” While he recognized the birth of the modern states-system out of the “ideological ‘total’ wars” from the Protestant Reformation through the Thirty Years War, Herz believed the return of ideological subversion in the form of the Cold War and Bolshevism mortally threatened the “inner coherence of the territorial state.” Herz (1957), pp. 476, 486–487.

For Schmitt, civil war had become global revolutionary war: a new type of war, “whose meaning and goal was the destruction of the existing social order,” and which was characterized by newly mobile, manipulable, globally-aggressive partisans connected to foreign powers. If ideological opponents (international and domestic) were the ‘enemy,’ then the ‘friend’ was now the internal faction’s interested external supporter. Schmitt (2007c), pp. 11, 22, 30–31, 49–52, 72, 74–76, 90–91, 93.

<sup>62</sup> Katz (1997); Owen (2010); Haas (2005); Haas (2012); and, Nexon (2009).

Scholars examining the role of ideology in international politics have broad agreement on the key revolutionary waves experienced by the modern states-system:

1. The European Wars of Religion, from 1500 through the mid- to late-1600s;
2. The Republican and Liberal upheavals, beginning with the French Revolution through the early 1900s; and,
3. The Marxist revolutions following the October Revolution through to the end of the Cold War.

These three major waves of ideological upheaval were responsible for the development of the concept of ‘ideology,’ the emergence of the modern state and of realism’s focus on sovereignty, the coining of the term ‘*realpolitik*,’ and they serve as the implicit historical definition for the status quo–revisionist categorization found in classical realist, English School, and neo-classical realist thought.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> In each revolutionary era, a form of ideological criticism arose to combat what was seen as the usurpation of common public life through the spread of false doctrines, disseminated to cover up undesirable motives and serving as instruments of the powerful. ‘Ideology’ evolved from ‘priestcraft’ which itself grew out of ‘popery,’—analogous expressions for the criticism of the dominant historical ideas of each age’s ruling class. Popery was a Protestant criticism of Catholic doctrine during the Reformation, priestcraft an Enlightenment term employed by the anticlerical *philosophes*, and ideology was coined during the French Revolution while Marx deployed the modern usage of ideology in the 1840s. Goldie (1989), pp. 266, 269, 286; Marx (1978), p. 173. In his introduction to the “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” Marx held that the criticism of religion was the genesis of all criticism, including the criticism of ideology. Marx (1978), p. 53.

On ideology’s relationship to the emergence of the sovereign state, see footnote 59 above.

Frustrated German liberals following the failed revolutions of 1848 coined the term *realpolitik* in opposition to idealistic Enlightenment universalism. Lebow (2003), p. 15n6.

Many classical realists incorporated revolutionary periods and the status quo–revisionist distinction into their theories. For example, Kissinger acknowledges the force and impact of revolutionary periods on the conduct of statecraft, defining a revolutionary period as one in which the order itself becomes the issue of contestation, the revolutionary state’s demands for justice overwhelming the legitimacy of the order. Revolutionary periods are not characterized with adjustment of differences through diplomacy, but with the subversion of loyalties and ultimately war. Kissinger (1957), pp. 1–3. On heterogeneous systems, see Aron (2003), pp. 99–124. On ‘revolutionism’ as a branch of international relations thought alongside realism and rationalism, see Wight (1991), pp. 9, 12, 41–43, 47–48, 97–98, 105; and, Bull (2002). Contemporary neoclassical realists – e.g. Schweller (1998) – return to the status quo–revisionist classification based on the works of Morgenthau, Kissinger, Carr, Wolfers, and Aron.

## *IDEOLOGY, GREAT POWERS & INTERNAL FACTIONS*

The fundamental logic linking transnational ideological struggle with interventions from ideologically-like great powers is contained already in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, where Thucydides writes of the Corcyraean civil war:

So bloody was the march of the revolution, and the impression which it made was the greater as it was one of the first to occur. Later on, one may say, the whole Hellenic world was convulsed; struggles being everywhere made by popular leaders to bring in the Athenians, and by the oligarchs to introduce the Spartans. In peace there would have been neither the pretext nor the wish to make such an invitation; but in war, with an alliance always at the command of either faction for the hurt of their adversaries and their own corresponding advantage, opportunities for bringing in the foreigner were never wanting to the revolutionary parties.<sup>64</sup>

Transnational ideological polarization spurs great powers to support forcible regime change where possible in order to affect the balance of power and to strengthen power at home against ideological opposition. In most cases, great powers intervene after a civil war in a peripheral state has already begun in order to tip the scales toward their preferred faction. Owen argues that great powers have an interest in promoting their ideology abroad because their domestic regime security depends on the progress of that ideology.<sup>65</sup> As Joseph Stalin

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The English School's Martin Wight identified a category of thinkers he termed "revolutionists," opposed to both the realist and rationalist visions of international order. Revolutionists were those theorists that rejected the states-system as the necessary focus of world politics and whose ideas attempted to transcend the international order. Here Wight inverted the concept of ideology: in the Marxist tradition, criticism of ideology was an attempt at political liberation from the illusory ideas cementing the status quo order; in Wight's thought, revolutionist ideologies are those ideas criticizing the status quo order. The revolutionist ideologies of each period had in common a focus on transnational connections, a rejection of the inside/outside division of politics produced by sovereignty, and regime change as a means toward reaching political unity. The ultimate ideological homogeneity of all regimes could occur through bottom-up revolution, evolutionary reform where possible, or the imperial spread of doctrine by a great power. Wight (1991), pp. 8–9, 12, 41–43, 47–48, 97–98; see also, Bull (1991), p. xii, and Goldie (1989), pp. 266–268, 270–271, 278.

<sup>64</sup> Thucydides (2006), 3.82.1. In an earlier episode, the Athenians acknowledged that the internal division of Mytiline into factions based on class and ideology could serve Athens' interest when considering an intervention. Thucydides (2006), 3.35–3.50. On the link between internal *stasis* and inter-polis war, see also Manicas (1982).

<sup>65</sup> Owen (2010) pp. 4, 23, 36. Intuitively, just as Third World states engage in omnibalancing with great powers to protect their regime against domestic upheaval, so too do great powers engage in political interventions in the periphery in order to protect a regime or government against domestic opposition.

explained to socialist dissident Milovan Đilas, “...whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach.”<sup>66</sup>

Conversely, transnational ideological polarization depends on a great power adopting and sponsoring an ideology. Without capturing the state apparatus of a major power, otherwise weak and fragmented partisans elsewhere will lack an external coercive presence around which they can rally. External powers will not feel threatened by ideological rivals until they can achieve a certain degree of relative power.<sup>67</sup> Great powers are the most significant actors with respect to transnational ideological movements, because of their substantial demonstration effect, and because they have more resources with which to sponsor regime change.<sup>68</sup>

Ideological “affiliate revolutionaries” see themselves as fighting against the same or similar enemies as their co-ideological great power. By engaging in a civil war, they are fighting both the near enemy (their domestic opponents) and also the far enemy (the strength of the bloc allied with their ideological rival great power). Internal factions will affiliate with an ideological position in order to receive support (both against the state and from rival internal factions) from existing revolutionary regimes, and because they see those revolutionary regimes as successful models to emulate.<sup>69</sup>

### *POLARITY, IDEOLOGIES & INTERNAL WAR*

Because great powers sponsor and identify with political ideologies, and because internal factions may use ideological affiliation to garner support, the distribution of power

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<sup>66</sup> Milovan Đilas (1962), p. 114; cited by Haas (2012), p. 30

<sup>67</sup> Haas (2005), p. 25; Haas (2012), pp. 30, 48.

<sup>68</sup> Owen (2010), pp. 64, 86.

<sup>69</sup> Katz (1997), pp. 38–39, 118. Westad (2007), p. 3. Owen discusses internal factions in terms of “transnational ideological networks” that cut across state borders, share ideological goals and adversaries, and tend to see their victories and defeats as shared to a certain degree. Owen (2010), pp. 32, 34–35,



ought to structure the effect that transnational political ideology has on internal war. The number of great powers determines how effective ideology as a signal of affiliation is likely to be. If there are many great powers, ideology may have an effect, but the broader stability preference toward the peripheries is likely to override affective links between any single great power and co-ideological partisans. There may be multiple great powers sharing related ideologies (i.e. conservatism and dynastic legitimism, or liberalism and republicanism), making ideology less effective as a signal of affiliation with a particular great power. Where ideology and the stability preference align—a great power concerned by upheaval caused by partisans of a threatening ideology—ideology’s effect will be to make antirevolutionary intervention more probable.

But if there are two superpowers with opposing ideologies, affiliation between partisan factions and the superpowers is clear and generally effective. Counterintervention to support affiliated partisans lengthens internal wars by keeping both sides from achieving a quick and decisive victory.<sup>70</sup> If there is one superpower, ideology may be effective at signaling affiliation or opposition to the superpower, but because of the unclear valence of events and unclear stakes in outcomes, it is also unclear whether ideological affiliation will overcome the disengagement of the superpower, whether the superpower will intervene on the expected side, and whether it will intervene to lengthen or to end the conflict.<sup>71</sup>

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Core complexity	High	Low	Low
Valence of events	Unclear	Clear	Unclear
<b>Ideology as signal</b>	Indeterminate	Effective	Indeterminate

<sup>70</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), pp. 416, 420.

<sup>71</sup> “[U]nipolarity takes away the principal tool through which minor powers in other [polar] systems deal with uncertainty about great-power intentions... In effect, the systemic imbalance of power magnifies the problems of uncertainty about intentions. ...[T]his reveals what is perhaps the paramount problem that unipolarity poses for peace: recalcitrant minor powers find themselves in *extreme* self-help.” Monteiro (2014), pp. 154–155. Wohlforth (2011), p. 34.

Stakes (Conflict inherent)	Medium	High	Low
Periphery relationship	Stability preference	Instability export	Disengagement
Intervention type	Antirevolutionary/ multilateral	Counterintervention	Arms-length, mediated
<b>Ideology &amp; duration</b>	Shorter	Longer	Indeterminate

### *SUMMARY*

Ideology is important to the study of internal war, and affects the character of internal war independently of security or strategic interests. Core assumptions made by structural realists have thus far prevented a deep engagement with the role of ideology in international politics. This has ceded the study of ideology in international relations to constructivists, but there are significant deficiencies in their accounts—most importantly, the role of the great powers and the changing balance of power between them. Ideological affiliation creates a link between internal factions and great powers, a link that in some cases creates a perception of interest or threat where there otherwise would not be, or that could override the pursuit of “interest defined in terms of power.”<sup>72</sup>

Because great powers sponsor ideologies internationally, and because the behavior of great powers is structured by the distribution of power, structural realism should be able to shed light on how the effects of ideology on internal war change as the polarity of the system changes. The expectations generated by polarity’s structuring effects are that ideology will function as an signal of affiliation different when there are different numbers of great powers, and that as polarity structures the stakes that great powers perceive in peripheral instability, ideological civil wars are likely to be longer or shorter depending on the distribution of power.

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<sup>72</sup> Morgenthau (1993), p. 5.

## **Polarity, sovereignty, and internal war**

This is the third and final section detailing how polarity structures the content of international politics. This section examines polarity's effect on the institution of sovereignty.<sup>73</sup> First, it ties system theory to the institution of sovereignty, noting that systemic shifts in polarity are constitutively linked to waves of new state creation. Second, it describes the accounting problems that these waves of new state creation pose for analyses of the broad patterns of internal war. Third, it then argues that polarity structures the incentives of great powers toward or against formal imperial relations with the periphery—i.e. did changing polarity matter to decolonization? Fourth, it examines whether new states are qualitatively different from established states in their risk of civil war or their balancing–bandwagoning behavior. Fifth, given that new states may behave differently, this section explains the structuring effect of polarity on the international politics surrounding new states.

### *SHIFTS IN POLARITY & SOVEREIGNTY*

Systemic change – a change from one polarity to another – is defined not just in terms of a redistribution of power, but also by the dismantling of the empires of those countries that fall from great power status. Collapse of empire and shifts in polarity are mutually constitutive: during WWII, W. T. R. Fox coined the term 'superpower' in describing the position of the U.S., USSR, and British Empire; but the dismantling of the British Empire was constitutive of its decline from great power status and of the shift in polarity.<sup>74</sup> Systemic change is occasioned

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<sup>73</sup> In Buzan's English School schema, the "primary institution" of sovereignty would represent the 'international society' third of the model, alongside the 'international system' and 'world society.' Buzan (2004), pp. 9, 98, 174, Chapter 6, 251–252.

<sup>74</sup> Fox (1944). Abernethy (2000), Chapter 7.

by, and in part constituted by, a wave of new state creation.<sup>75</sup> One cannot understand the patterns of civil war unless the drivers of new state creation are also understood.

The modern states-system has undergone three major waves of state creation, each one following a hegemonic struggle that redistributed the balance of power:<sup>76</sup>

Hegemonic conflict	Resultant polarity	Dismantled great powers	Location and timing
Napoleonic Wars	Multipolar	Netherlands, Spain	New World, 1810–1830
WWI & WWII	Bipolar	Europe, Japan	Old World, 1940–1980
Cold War	Unipolar	USSR	Eurasia, 1990–2000

The first major wave of state creation followed the Napoleonic Wars. Spain and the Netherlands were definitively dropped from the ranks of the great powers and were unable to quash colonial revolts or takeovers.<sup>77</sup> Napoleon’s conquest of the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal precipitated the collapse of metropolitan sovereignty over their far-flung colonies. The Dutch maintained control of the East Indies, but lost the Cape and Ceylon to the British. However, it was the Spanish (and Portuguese) loss of imperial sovereignty that resulted in the decolonization of most of the mainland New World. The British and United States worked together to strip Spain of its ability to suppress colonial revolts or reclaim imperial sovereignty. The British pledged naval support for the continued independence of the Latin American

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<sup>75</sup> Gilpin argues that hegemonic conflicts are about a reordering of the rules of the system, and that control of territory is central to understanding the shifts following hegemonic wars. The ‘rights and rules’ that Gilpin speaks of include the ‘property rights’ in the international system, i.e. the practices regarding control and division of territory. Gilpin holds that territoriality is the essence of sovereignty’s configuration of authority: “The control and division of territory constitute the basic mechanism governing the distribution of scarce resources among the states in an international system.” Gilpin (1981), pp. 35–37.

<sup>76</sup> Theorists of hegemony have tied major shifts in the distribution of power to hegemonic conflicts. In such conflicts, great powers clash in a showdown that expands to encompass a struggle over the very rules of international society. On hegemonic wars and change in the international system, see: Gilpin (1981); Rasler & Thompson (1994); Arrighi (1994); and, Knutsen (1999).

<sup>77</sup> Rasler & Thompson (1994), Appendix B.

colonies, and the British and United States collaborated on promulgating the Monroe Doctrine to keep European colonial powers from recolonizing.<sup>78</sup>

The second wave of state creation followed the ‘twenty years crisis’ of WWI & WWII. The axis powers and remaining European colonial powers—Germany, Japan, Italy, Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain—were all decimated by the two world wars, the demographic drop, and the financial burdens of war debt and the transition to welfare states. Over 80 new states were created in the process of decolonization following WWII. The United States and USSR became the two remaining polar powers in the systemic shift from multipolarity to bipolarity. Imperial sovereignty was no longer sustainable, especially in the face of two remaining anti-colonial superpowers.<sup>79</sup> Conquest of the metropolises led to a temporary withdrawal from colonial administration, and subsequently the polar powers stood in the way of a lasting reassertion of imperial sovereignty over rebellious colonies.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Abernethy (2000), pp. 65–66, 70–72.

<sup>79</sup> “As the powers in Europe completed their self-destruction in World War II, most revolutionary movements in the Third World were coming of age. And the revolutions that gave most Third World countries their freedom happened after World War II, when the Cold War had already become a fully-fledged international system. In other words, the forming of anti-colonial revolutionary movements and of the new Third World states is inextricably linked in time to the Cold War conflict and to the Cold War ideologies. Though the processes of decolonization and of superpower conflict may be seen as having separate origins, the history of the late twentieth century cannot be understood without exploring the ties that bind them together.” Westad (2007), p. 74.

“[T]he existence of two superpowers, who both were eager to disassociate themselves from European colonialism, opened up new possibilities for aid and support... [T]he availability of outside backers later became a key element of instability within Third World states – it helped to create lasting rebellions and insurgencies after decolonization.” Westad (2007), pp. 89, 100–101. Specifically on U.S. anti-colonialism, see Westad (2007), pp. 112–114, 118, 126.

<sup>80</sup> Most arguments regarding post-WWII decolonization focus on changing norms of legitimacy and morality. See, for example, Jackson (1990). On the other hand, there is a strong case for the shift in polarity rather than norms being the crucial driver of decolonization: “While it could be argued that much of both the ideological and the economic justification for having colonies had come under pressure in the metropolis during the interwar crisis years, there is little doubt that it was the second war in Europe that destroyed both the will and the ability of European elites to keep their colonial possessions.” Westad (2007), p. 86.

The structural case for post-WWII decolonization rests on two factors: the competition and socialization mechanisms that Waltz puts forward as explanations for the functional likeness of states; and, the shift in power from colonial great powers to anti-colonial superpowers as a result of WWII.

The third wave of state creation followed the resolution of the Cold War. The decline of the Soviet Union and the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity were constituted by the collapse of the USSR's imperial sovereignty. The informal empire in the Eastern Bloc revolted without being quashed by Gorbachev, and subsequently the USSR itself broke apart into its fifteen constitutive SSRs. More than anything it was the loss of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan that removed the possibility of imperial exercise of power from Russia.<sup>81</sup> Other Eastern European countries created during the twenty years crisis also split: Yugoslavia has split into now seven different states; and Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce split the country into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In sum, shifts in polarity and major waves of state creation have been inherently linked. In each case, the shift in the systemic distribution of power was constituted by the collapse of the imperial sovereignty exercised by former great powers. Remaining polar powers played an important role in each case in undermining a reassertion of imperial sovereignty by the fallen

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Waltz's mechanisms of socialization and competition (see Waltz (1979), pp. 97–99) are clearly at work in the European colonial period and the post-WWII periods to produce homogeneity of unit types. Great powers—Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Britain and France—were able to construct colonial empires during early phases of European expansion. By the 1800s, lesser powers (Italy), rising great powers (Germany & Japan), countries that had no business becoming colonial powers (Belgium), and countries that were otherwise anti-colonial (United States) felt pressure to obtain colonies, even if the territories obtained were strategically and economically worthless. Jackson (2007), p. 67. Robinson & Gallagher (1968).

With WWII and the destruction of Europe and Japan, the most important units in the system shifted abruptly from imperial powers to anti-imperial nation-states. Waltz, drawing from oligarchy theory, argues that the character of the system is determined by its most important units. See Waltz (1979), pp. 89–90, 104–111, 115–116, 131–138. There was a structural proclivity toward emulation of the colonial powers during multipolarity (which explains why New World decolonization did not require international normative change), and likewise during bipolarity the homogenizing logic of anarchy worked against empire and toward national states. The former great powers seeking to regain their competitiveness initially tried to reassert power over their colonies in the wake of WWII, but the costs of overcoming indigenous and superpower opposition outweighed the potential strategic, economic, or prestige benefits of maintaining empires. Abernethy (2000), Chapter 7.

The anti-colonial position of the superpowers was not solely normative, but was also made practical by the changed structure of the system following WWII (argued in detail below).

<sup>81</sup> On Ukraine's importance to a revived Russian imperialism, see: Brzezinski (1997), pp. 46, 92, 104, 106, 113, 119; Bush & Scowcroft (1998), p. 512; Brzezinski (2004), pp. 98, 103; Brzezinski (2012), pp. 95, 187–188.

great powers. New state creation has been the result of each shift in the polarity of the system because in each case a former great power could no longer sustain its imperial position. New state creation does not arise *ex nihilo*, but the vast majority of new states have been the result of major shifts in the international distribution of power. Beyond simply a static conception of polarity, a dynamic understanding of polarity allows investigation not only of the constraining effects of systemic structure, but the important consequences of *shifts* in systemic structure.

#### *IMPERIAL TO NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY & PATTERNS OF INTERNAL WAR*

The data on internal war presents researchers with a problem: at the height of European colonial imperialism the number of states numbered in the 40s, whereas today the number of states is approaching 200. The incidence of civil war has changed over time, but it is hard to determine how significant this is given the dozens of states created in successive waves of imperial collapse and decolonization. The transition from empire to nation-state results in an accounting problem for political scientists constructing datasets: some conflicts during the age of European colonialism are traditional internal wars, but others are colonial or imperial conflicts that do not fit the definition of intra-state war but are not inter-state wars either. These ‘extra-state’ wars are contained within one sovereign political unit – the empire – but are fought between politically differentiable parts of the empire: metropole and periphery.

Extra-state conflicts and intra-state conflicts in post-colonial states ought to be examined in terms of their continuity, rather than accepting a categorical difference between the two. These conflicts occur in the same regions, within the same administrative units, and between the same groups of people—the change is not necessarily in the nature of the conflict, but in the way in which sovereign authority is arranged. Insisting on only looking at intra-state wars may understate the amount of conflict and intervention during the multipolar period, and

overstate the rise in conflict coinciding with decolonization. Many internal wars in new states were fought along lines of conflict that pre-existed decolonization or emerged from the national liberation struggle. As such, in order to understand the patterns of internal war and their relationship to decolonization, extra-state wars must also be examined—otherwise patterns in intra-state war may appear novel or exceptional when in fact they are continuations of pre-existing patterns.

### *POLARITY & IMPERIAL SOVEREIGNTY*

Imperial sovereignty is important to the understanding of internal war because it affects how internal factions perceive the risks and opportunities of appealing for external support, and it affects how competing great powers perceive new states as the objects of the struggle for power and the stakes of intervening in peripheral internal wars. Both the possibility for formal recolonization and the fear of neo-colonialism figure prominently in the internal politics of states undergoing civil war. Structural realism expects instability *between great powers* within multipolarity and stable relations between great powers within bipolarity.<sup>82</sup> But for relations *between great powers and the periphery* structural realism expects the opposite: a stability preference during multipolarity and the export of instability during bipolarity.

Waltz argues that because states seek security and survival, strong states manifest this in the form of imperialism toward weaker states. It is the imbalance of power that creates the possibility and ambition for strong states to extend their control.<sup>83</sup> But the drive to extend control, and the manner in which it is institutionalized, is structured by the polarity of the system. The more complex the relations between the great powers, the more the great powers will seek

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<sup>82</sup> Waltz (1979), Chapter 9.

<sup>83</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 106, 131–132.



stability in their relations with the periphery. The more difficult it is to discern who will benefit from an event or outcome in the periphery – both in terms of the number of great powers, and in terms of ideology as an effective signal of affiliation – the greater the drive to formalize great power relations with their peripheral clients. Finally, the greater the freedom of maneuver open to peripheral actors seeking support, the greater the drive toward formal imperialism. The difference in the potential bargaining power of clients leads to different imperial responses: formal imperial relationships with clients mitigated the problem great powers faced in dealing with the choice enjoyed by peripheral allies; whereas with clearer valence and/or more restricted freedom of maneuver, informal imperial relationships were more prevalent.<sup>84</sup>

Polarity	Multipolar	Bipolar	Unipolar
Valence of events	Unclear	Clear	Unclear
Freedom of maneuver	High	Medium	Low
Periphery relationship	Stability preference	Instability export	Disengagement
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate	Effective	Indeterminate
<b>Imperialism</b>	Formal	Informal	Informal

### *NEW “WEAK” STATES & INTERNAL WAR*

A persistent theme in studies of internal war is the prevalence of so-called weak states created following World War II, and arguing that the spike in internal war incidence is due to the contemporaneous spike in new state creation from decolonization. Wimmer and Min’s 2006 “From Empire to Nation-State,” Fearon and Laitin’s 2003 “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” Jackson’s 1990 *Quasi-States*, and Hironaka’s 2005 *Neverending Wars* each make the case that states undergoing or having recently undergone the transition from colony to nation-state are particularly prone to internal conflict. Grovogui takes a position against this line of argument, maintaining that comparing African states to the Westphalian model ignores

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<sup>84</sup> Bull (1984), p. 150; and, Doyle (1986), pp. 136, 343.

that Westphalia was never universalized, and decolonization did not create a unified international institution of sovereignty. Rather, European empires imposed a different regime of sovereignty for extra-European territories, a distinction that carries through to the “weak” African states today.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, lacking traditional external (Westphalian) sovereignty does not also imply lack of internal (Weberian) sovereignty. Internal war is political, not necessarily a question of state capacity, so the degree to which a state is established (or even democratic) ought not affect its risk of descending into internal war.<sup>86</sup>

New states facing internal upheaval do exhibit a particular pathology that differentiates them from the behavior expected by structural realism.<sup>87</sup> When internal partisans are the biggest threat faced by a regime, its predominant international behavior is not balancing (as expected by structural realism) but ‘omnibalancing.’ This appears to be bandwagoning behavior, with a weak state allying itself with a threatening great power and in some cases compromising its sovereignty. Yet, David argues that the leadership is acting primarily in the interest of regime survival rather than traditional Westphalian state sovereignty, using the external alliance to balance against internal threat. A leader may even bandwagon with the

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<sup>85</sup> Grovogui (2002). Other scholars have also explored the different types of sovereignty in European and extra-European spaces. Carl Schmitt traces the geographic division of the world into different juridical areas in which violence and appropriation were permitted by European entities for European purposes, including amity lines, the distinction between land and sea, and the appropriation of *Terra Nullius* between European powers. Schmitt (2003). Edward Keene explains Grotius’ understanding of sovereignty to arrive at a similar conclusion: that sovereignty in Grotius’ thought was divisible (rather than unitary à la Bodin & Hobbes), allowing for delegation of external authority and violence monopolization outside of Europe. The function of *dividing sovereignty across territorial boundaries* was to provide a level of governance that could control international trade and civilize the extra-European world. Keene (2002). Janice Thomson likewise notes the delegation of sovereign powers to the Dutch and British mercantile companies that pioneered colonialism in advance of direct administration. Thomson (1994), pp. 32–41, 59–67, 97–105.

<sup>86</sup> Arguing against democracy as a conflict-resolving regime capable of preventing civil war, see: Hegre, Ellingsen, and Gleditsch (2001).

<sup>87</sup> The different manner in which new states approach balancing/bandwagoning behavior leads some to argue that weak states are constitutively different units within the international system. Neuman (1998), pp. 4–6. See also, Vincent (1974), pp. 12–13; Jackson (1990); and, Hironaka (2005), p. 19.

external power most closely affiliated with its internal threat, doing so in an attempt to appease the domestic threat's international allies.<sup>88</sup> This pathology is important when trying to understand internal faction appeals for assistance from external powers, which powers are sought out, and why actors might make counterintuitive appeals.

### *POLARITY & MANAGING NEW STATES*

“Non-intervention is a political and metaphysical term meaning almost the same thing as intervention.” —Attributed to Talleyrand by Lord Alvanley, 1832<sup>89</sup>

Each era of the balance of power has had to manage the entry of newly created states into the international system. As new political entities, their potential to alter the balance of power in unexpected ways gives existing powers an interest in new state alignment.

Recognizing this, states have promulgated regimes – sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, and sometimes through a learning process – in order to remove new states as objects of international contention, and thereby avoid destructive competition and instability between the great powers. The number of great powers in the system has a constraining effect on what type of new state regime is functional, given the structural pressures faced by the great powers and new states alike.

Where formal imperialism was a possibility, but the valence of events was unclear and ideological affiliation was not a strong signal, the new state regime was one of denial or exclusion. In the New World, it was manifested in the Monroe Doctrine, a collaboration between the United States and Britain to prevent the recolonization of the Americas (enforced

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<sup>88</sup> David (1991a), pp. 6–7, 14. See also, David (1991b); Acharya (1998), p. 168; and, Jervis's discussion of Schweller in Jervis (1997), p. 173. Ayoob argues that state-building and internal war are really two sides of the same coin. Likewise, David observes that many conflicts begin as attempts at state-building through the suppression of perceived internal threats to the regime's authority. Ayoob (1998), pp. 34, 38, and 42. David (1998), p. 92. Modelski (1961).

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Wight (1991), p. 136.

principally by Britain, until the 1904–1920s transition when the United States began to assert its hemispheric *droit de regard*). Where the valence of events was clear, the stakes were high, and ideology was an effective signal of alignment, new states were subject to an external demand for internal political balance and foreign policy neutralization. During the Cold War, the two superpowers attempted neutralizations of buffer states and new states in an attempt to remove them from the political balance and militarized contestation. Finally, where the valence of events is unclear, the stakes low, and ideology a marginal factor, the new state regime is one of superpower disengagement and internationalization. In the post-Cold War era, this new state regime has been expressed through international institutions – newly functional with the passing of the sharply conflictual bipolar structure – which assist in the state-building, international integration, and governance of new states.

Polarity	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Periphery relationship	Stability preference	Instability export	Disengagement
Freedom of maneuver	High	Medium	Low
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate	Effective	Indeterminate
Imperialism	Formal	Informal	Informal
<b>New state regime</b>	Exclusion	Neutralization	Internationalization

The international politics of new state creation, established by the great powers in the wake of hegemonic conflict, is an important factor in determining how external powers will assess new states as contested objects in their struggle for power. Both the possibilities for intervention and the type of termination possible in an internal war are shaped by the particular new state regime, which is itself a product of the logic of the distribution of power.

## SUMMARY

Many scholars of internal war place a great deal of explanatory weight on decolonization and the creation of “weak” states to explain the patterns of civil war since

WWII. The transition from colonial empire to nation-state is an important piece of the story of the patterns of internal war over the past 200 years, but not in the way that proponents of the “weak state” theories believe it to be. It is not new state weakness that drives patterns of internal war (new states are not more inclined to descend into civil war), but the place of new states as objects of international political competition. Thus it is necessary to understand how the polarity of the system structures the contestation over new states.

New state creation is constitutively linked to shifts in the systemic distribution of power—hegemonic conflicts that produce a new polarity are defined in part by the imperial collapse of states that are dropped from the rank of great power. Acknowledging the importance of new state creation but simultaneously ignoring extra-state conflicts creates a misleading picture of the novelty or continuity of patterns of internal war. The logic of different polarities creates proclivities that incline great powers toward formal colonial imperialism or toward informal imperial relations with clients. It does not follow from the external weakness of new states that they are likewise internally weak and therefore more prone to internal war. Instead, “weak” states exhibit bandwagoning strategies when dealing with internal upheaval. The interaction between structure, ideology, and formal imperialism sets the terms for the international politics of (non-)intervention into new states: exclusion, neutralization, or internationalization. The foregoing structuring effect of polarity on sovereignty has implications for internal war onsets, internal faction appeals, external interventions, and possibilities for terminations.

## Multipolarity

Multipolarity is expected to produce the most conservative circumstances for and character of internal war.

Classical realists prized the multipolar balance of power system of the 1700s and 1800s for its flexibility.<sup>90</sup> Because there were many great powers, the conflict between any two great powers was not as sharp as the later bipolar superpower standoff.<sup>91</sup> Exceptionally skilled diplomats and

statesmen – Otto von Bismarck being foremost among them – were praised for their ability to navigate and manipulate the complex politics of the ever-shifting balance.<sup>92</sup> Based on the same observations, structural realists argued that multipolarity was not as stable a structure as bipolarity, precisely because the complexity of balancing multiple security-seeking states in anarchy produced greater levels of uncertainty.<sup>93</sup> Without a Bismarck, states were more likely to blunder into avoidable wars rather than successfully adjust the balance to skirt conflict.

Multiple great powers in conflict and highly complex relations between them structures the interests of both factions fighting internal wars and great powers weighing intervention into internal wars. Great powers do have intrinsic stakes in the outcome of events in the peripheries, especially because the margin between great powers and rising or regional powers is not so great

Expectations for Multipolarity

System	
Conflict inherent	Medium
Core complexity	High
Valence of events	Unclear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	High
Periphery relationship	Stability preference
Intervention type	Antirevolutionary/ multilateral
Duration	Shorter
Termination type	Military
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate
Ideology and duration	Shorter
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Formal
New state regime	Exclusion

<sup>90</sup> Morgenthau (1993), Chapter 12. Kissinger (1994), p. 182.

<sup>91</sup> Deutsch & Singer (1964), pp. 396–400. Mearsheimer (2006), p. 80.

<sup>92</sup> Kissinger (1994), Chapters 5–7.

<sup>93</sup> Waltz, (1979), Chapter 8. Mearsheimer (2001), pp. 334–347. Mearsheimer (2006), p. 79.

as in other polarities. Multipolar balances are complex, and so the value of allies and extra-regional resources for the great powers is higher.<sup>94</sup> But because there are multiple great powers that could potentially benefit from events in the periphery, it is not always clear which great power stands to benefit from a particular outcome. This uncertainty is exacerbated by the broad freedom of maneuver enjoyed by internal factions when seeking support from the range of external powers capable of intervening. A great power's extrinsic interest in the outcome of an internal war may be unclear or may shift rapidly for reasons that have little to do with the internal politics of the civil conflict. Not all disturbances in the periphery require a response from a great power, because a change in influence in the peripheries may not have a decisive effect on the core balance of power, given that there are many powers capable of forming different alliance configurations.

The complexity of core relations and uncertainty in the periphery results in a stability preference on the part of the great powers. Upheaval in minor states ought not be allowed to spread or to disrupt the balance between the great powers—there is a fundamental link between great power war and social revolution. This was the essential insight of Klemens von Metternich in designing and advocating the Concert of Europe following the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>95</sup> This stability preference manifests itself in terms of intervention, the importance of ideology, and the role of imperial sovereignty. Because of the recognized link between upheaval and great power warfare, if multiple powers were intervening in a civil war, they would in almost every case intervene on the same side in support of the state against the rebels. Counterintervention or support of rebellious factions was exceedingly rare. Internal wars were

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<sup>94</sup> Wallerstein (2011), p. 38. Wohlforth *et al.* (2007), pp. 158–159, 178.

<sup>95</sup> Kissinger (1994), Chapter 4.

principally terminated through military victory, rather than a negotiation that might legitimize the revolutionaries and leave open the possibility for a return to civil dissolution.

Ideology was important in forging transnational or regional alliances between partisans, but less important in determining whether a great power would intervene on the side of a given faction. Whereas in bipolarity each ideological camp had a clear leader identified with the promotion and defense of a certain regime type, during multipolarity there were multiple powers on each side of the prevailing ideological divide. The two republican powers, Britain and France, both had interests in promoting liberalism or republicanism, but also had an intense rivalry and jockeying for advantage. Appealing to one or the other on the basis of shared ideology might not only provoke the suspicion of conservative powers but also the suspicion of the other rival liberal/republican power. Similarly, the conservative powers of the Holy Alliance often had greater disputes between each other than with their ideological foes. As case in point, the WWI began as a dispute between conservative powers over intervention in a conservative Serbia facing nationalist ferment—liberal powers were not a factor until battle lines were drawn.

The rise of new ideologies – Marxism, fascism, and anarchism – that challenged both conservatism and liberalism, did not fundamentally change the role of ideology in linking internal war to international politics; ideology's effect remained constrained by the structure of the system. Both the Russian Civil War and Spanish Civil War, for example, saw ideology serving to link transnational partisans, but featured a multilateral antirevolutionary intervention. The Chinese Civil War saw Soviet support for the governing Nationalist party to the extreme detriment of the Chinese Communist party for the better part of the civil war.



Finally, the complexity of core relations, uncertain valence of events, freedom of maneuver enjoyed by potential clients, and the stability preference of the great powers, there was a structural incentive to formalize core–periphery relationships, especially in reaction to core competition or peripheral instability.<sup>96</sup> In periods of intense competition between the core states in multipolarity, such as the New Imperialism period of 1870–1900, there was a push toward the formalization of core–periphery relationships (Bismarck for example encouraged French colonial expansion to distract them from European issues).<sup>97</sup> This “scramble” increased the clarity of imperial sovereignty over peripheral areas, and reinforced the imperial trading preferences that supported core economies. In many cases, as noted by Robinson & Gallagher, great powers responding to peripheral instability were motivated more by the logic of denial rather than the expectations of direct benefits from intervening in peripheral areas.<sup>98</sup> As a

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<sup>96</sup> The structural link between multipolarity and formal imperialism raises the question of whether formal imperialism can or will return to international politics if there is a return to multipolarity in the future. Implicated in this question is the problem of discerning whether structural change or normative change was more important to the transition from imperial sovereignty to nation-state sovereignty. If structure is more influential than normative change – consider that no international normative change was required for New World decolonization, and New World decolonization did not create a norm obliging Old World decolonization – then a future multipolarity may disinter a form formal imperialism. There are two caveats, however.

First, part of the shift was not just the shift from multipolarity to bipolarity, but also the replacement of colonial great powers with anti-colonial superpowers. The mechanisms of socialization and competition that states face in anarchy put pressure on colonial powers to give up their imperial sovereignty. If the future shift to multipolarity is not accompanied by the rise of great powers practicing formal imperialism, the structural proclivity toward a return to formal imperialism will be weaker.

Second, a future formal imperialism will almost certainly be qualitatively different from the European colonialism of 1500–1960 or the classical empires that came before. European colonialism itself underwent several permutations over this period, from missionary conquest, to settlers and exploration, to mercantile companies, to formal imperial administration. A future manifestation of formalized imperial relationships may look like the joint-stock companies of the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, or it may be an outgrowth of a great power’s hegemonic position within regional economic and/or security organizations, or it may come in a novel and unexpected form. Even if the normative change of the 1960s terminated the legitimacy of racist colonial imperialism, future formal imperialism might be sanctioned by new and different normative justifications for the subjugation of man by man—*homo homini lupus* (Plautus, *Asinara* (195 B.C.) and Hobbes (1998), *Epistola dedicatoria*).

<sup>97</sup> Kissinger (1994), p. 160.

<sup>98</sup> Robinson & Gallagher (1961).

result, the political regime created to deal with the wave of New World state creation – the Monroe Doctrine – was centered on denial or exclusion.

*EXPECTED STRUCTURAL EFFECTS OF MULTIPOLARITY*

- M1. Core conflict and complexity will result in a great power stability preference in the peripheries.
- M2. Which great power stands to benefit from events or outcomes in the periphery is often unclear.
- M3. Intervention is almost always on the side of the state against the rebels. If multiple powers intervene, they will almost always intervene on the same side.
- M4. Internal factions enjoy broad freedom of maneuver when appealing for assistance.
- M5. Formal colonial imperialism is a feasible method for great powers seeking to impose stability in the peripheries.
- M6. Ideology is important to internal and regional partisan affiliations, but is less significant in affecting the link between great powers and their co-ideological affiliates.
- M7. Great powers will attempt to impose a regime of exclusion when dealing with the political place of newly created states.

## Bipolarity

Bipolarity is expected to produce the most intense environment for and character of internal war.

Where classical realists lauded multipolarity as the golden age of the balance of power, structural realists argued that bipolarity more stable, certain, and predictable.<sup>99</sup> The sharpness of the faceoff between the two superpowers was

### Expectations for Bipolarity

System	
Conflict inherent	High
Core complexity	Low
Valence of events	Clear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	Medium
Periphery relationship	Instability export
Intervention type	Counterintervention
Duration	Longer
Termination type	Military
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Effective
Ideology and duration	Longer
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Informal
New state regime	Neutralization

ameliorated by the clarity and simplicity of navigating the balance.<sup>100</sup> Alliances and their mercurial reconfigurations mattered less to balancing than steady economic and military buildup. Less complexity meant less (although certainly not zero) possibility for serious miscalculation leading to war, and did not require a Bismarck (or even a Kissinger) for the superpowers to avoid an unnecessary and undesired war.

Having two superpowers in an exacting but clear standoff created new and different constraints on the strategies open to factions fighting internal wars and constraints on the interests of the superpowers as they sponsored, supported, and intervened in internal wars. Because capabilities are concentrated to a greater degree in bipolarity than in multipolarity, the superpowers enjoyed a somewhat larger margin of power relative to regional powers or

<sup>99</sup> Waltz, (1979), Chapter 8. Mearsheimer (2001), pp. 334–347. Mearsheimer (2006), p. 79.

<sup>100</sup> Waltz (1964), p. 903–904.

peripheral states than did the great powers during multipolarity.<sup>101</sup> Balancing during bipolarity is more reliant on internal buildup than on alliances, lessening the value of allies and of extra-regional resources for the superpowers' vital security interests.<sup>102</sup>

Having only two superpowers to assess when discerning who stood to gain from events in the periphery simplified and clarified the stakes involved in different outcomes. Further, the freedom of maneuver enjoyed by internal factions was more restricted than during multipolarity—to be sure, states and factions switched alignments when they could receive better external support (and some attempted non-alignment), but their ability to do so was relatively constrained.<sup>103</sup> Because of the greater clarity external powers have in understanding the potential change in alignment brought about by an internal war, a bipolar structure risks the turning of even minor events into larger crises, even if the states are otherwise inconsequential. During bipolarity there are no states perceived to be wholly peripheral to core interests; the activities and changes in every state become the purview of the superpowers.<sup>104</sup>

The simplicity of the intense superpower stalemate and the clarity of gains and losses in the periphery leads to the export of core instability to the Third World in the form of proxy wars. Domino-effect logic means that fears of indirect or unintended consequences stemming from an event – such as a revolution – amplify the perceived stakes.<sup>105</sup> The superpowers pay undue attention to minor setbacks that reach beyond core security interests.<sup>106</sup> While bipolarity means objectively that allies matter less because they are incapable of decisively

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<sup>101</sup> Jervis (1997), p. 120.

<sup>102</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 116, 163.

<sup>103</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 171–172, 174, 185. Westad (2007), p. 96.

<sup>104</sup> Waltz (1979), pp. 172–172.

<sup>105</sup> Jervis (1997), p. 121. Walt (1996).

<sup>106</sup> Waltz (1979), p. 205.

changing the balance, the subjective perceptions generated by the bipolar structure leads states to behave as if the allegiances of peripheral states matter a great deal, allowing peripheral states to engage in tail-wagging-the-dog behavior.<sup>107</sup> Whereas conflicts within multipolarity might be modeled by the ‘stag hunt’ game, bipolarity transforms most conflicts into the game of ‘chicken’—each dispute becoming a test of wills between the superpowers.<sup>108</sup> Not surprisingly, we saw a shift in intervention: whereas in multipolarity external powers tended to intervene on the same side of an internal war, in bipolarity they tended to intervene on opposing sides.<sup>109</sup>

Ideology remained an important factor in internal wars, but because of the bipolar structure ideology had a different effect than it does during multipolarity or unipolarity. In many cases, superpowers imposed ideological interpretations of conflicts upon the internal factions, partly driven by their security dilemma, and partly to render certain conflicts intelligible to them. These conflicts may initially have been spurred by non-ideological factors (defects of the political system, ethnic or religious difference, economic distribution disputes, ancient grievances, etc.), but became ideologized as the external powers and internal factions

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<sup>107</sup> Jervis (1997), p. 117.

<sup>108</sup> Jervis (1997), p. 122. Where Iterated Stag Hunt models a proclivity toward escalation, Iterated Chicken inclines players away from coordination (neither mutual cooperation or mutual defection) because of the extreme punishment for mutual defection and the strategic uncertainty that accompanies a multiple equilibria game:

Two kinds of conflicts are often distinguished in the literature: those where aggression feeds on itself in a cycle of fear, as in stag hunt; and those where toughness forces the opponent to back down, as in chicken. In stag hunt, actions are strategic complements: the incentive to choose H [*viz.* the hawkish course of action] is increasing in the probability that the opponent chooses H. This can trigger an escalating spiral of aggression as in the classic work of Schelling and Jervis. In a chicken game, actions are strategic substitutes: the incentive to choose H is decreasing in the probability that the opponent chooses H. This captures a scenario where players will back down in the face of aggression. For example, suppose the hawkish action represents sending soldiers to a disputed territory. If only one country sends soldiers, then it will control the territory at little cost. But if both countries send their soldiers, a war could easily break out. If the value of the territory is not large enough to justify the risk of war, it is a game of chicken. Baliga & Sjöström (2009), p. 5.

Fear of minor conflicts escalating to a World War III between the superpowers moderated the behavior of decision-makers during the Cold War. Instead of decisive or escalating interventions, the superpowers engaged in drawn out indecisive support for affiliated clients or partisans in conflicts around the world, dramatically lengthening the duration of proxy conflicts. Waltz (1979), pp. 161–193.

<sup>109</sup> Hironaka, pp. 26, 56.

interacted.<sup>110</sup> Ideological affiliations taken on by internal factions were often cynical, opportunistic, or done out of pragmatic concerns, rather than genuine ideological belief.<sup>111</sup> Ideological conflicts within bipolarity should be more intense, both in terms of duration and battle deaths. They should see more military victories than negotiated cessations. The stakes of internal war outcomes perceived by external powers should be higher, and thus intervention into ideological conflicts should also be more frequent. Bipolarity is a sharply conflictual structure, and where internal wars are ideological they will generally suffer to a greater degree across nearly all aspects when compared with non-ideological wars.

Finally, the stability of the superpower impasse, clearer valence of events, restricted freedom of maneuver enjoyed by clients, and the proclivity toward exporting instability to the peripheries means that informal rather than formal imperialism is feasible in regulating core–periphery relationships.<sup>112</sup> Because the bipolar structure constrains choice, ideology as a signal of alignment or realignment becomes much clearer than under multipolarity. The old principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* no longer operates solely on a nation-state scale, but on the bloc scale, legitimizing intervention within blocs and incentivizing regime change in rival blocs.<sup>113</sup> The structure of bipolarity extends the security dilemma not just between the states in the peripheries, but inside the states in the periphery as well.<sup>114</sup> The outcome is a self-fulfilling prophecy of conflict and intervention—aid to partisans from one side will trigger the suspicion

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<sup>110</sup> Aron (2003), p. 140

<sup>111</sup> Hironaka, pp. 24, 118.

<sup>112</sup> Bull, ed. Bull, p. 150; and, Doyle, p. 136.

<sup>113</sup> Vincent, pp. 353, 358–360.

<sup>114</sup> Acharya, p. 165. Doyle, p. 343. Schmitt (2007c).

of the other side, while non-intervention might inadvertently signal one side leaving the field open to the other.<sup>115</sup> Consequently, the

superpowers' attempt to manage the wave of new state creation resulting from WWII and decolonization was centered on domestic political neutralizations.

#### *EXPECTED STRUCTURAL EFFECTS OF BIPOLARITY*

- B1. The sharpness and clarity of core conflict will result in the export of instability to the peripheries.
- B2. Which superpower stands to benefit from events or outcomes in the periphery is much clearer.
- B3. Intervention may support the state or the rebels, but if both superpowers are involved it is almost always in the form of counterintervention.
- B4. Internal factions have limited freedom of maneuver when appealing for assistance.
- B5. Informal imperialism is feasible as a method for the superpowers to manage clients or affiliate partisans.
- B6. Ideology is an effective signal of affiliation between factions and the superpowers; superpowers will impose ideological interpretations on events; and, conflicts will increase in ideological intensity over time.
- B7. The superpowers will attempt to impose political/ideological neutralization on newly created states.

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<sup>115</sup> Hironaka, p. 114. Vincent, pp. 356–9.

## Unipolarity

Unipolarity is expected to produce a permissive environment for internal war, characterized principally by the depoliticization of the periphery.

Unipolarity was unanticipated by most realists, classical and structural,<sup>116</sup> because there was not a clear theoretical or historical distinction between an international system in

which one power emerged with an unbalanceable concentration of capabilities and a system in which the rise of a universal empire ended a plural balance of power.<sup>117</sup> The collapse of the USSR created the need for greater precision in distinguishing between unipolarity, hegemony, and empire.

Waltz had not theorized unipolarity in his 1979 *Theory of International Politics*, discussing only bipolarity and multipolarity.<sup>118</sup> As the sole remaining superpower, the United States has no peer competitor to engage in hot or cold conflict, and might not need particularly skilled statesmen to guide its foreign policy. Shortly before 9/11, Kissinger felt it necessary to argue that the United States still needed to have a foreign policy concept following the end of

### Expectations for Unipolarity

System	
Conflict inherent	Low
Core complexity	Low
Valence of events	Unclear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	Low
Periphery relationship	Disengagement
Intervention type	Arms-length/ mediated
Duration	Indeterminate
Termination type	Negotiated
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate
Ideology and duration	Indeterminate
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Informal
New state regime	Internationalization

<sup>116</sup> Monteiro and others point toward Kaplan's 1957 *System and Process in International Politics* as an early exception, although Kaplan does not use the term 'unipolarity.' Monteiro (2014), p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> Jervis (2011), p. 255. For case studies on historical balance of power systems, the vast majority of which collapsed into a region-consolidating empire, see Wohlforth *et al.* (2007).

<sup>118</sup> Although Waltz did mention unipolarity in his earlier 1964 piece, "The Stability of a Bipolar World." Waltz (1964), p. 905.



the Cold War.<sup>119</sup> Realists disagreed on whether or not unipolarity was stable, and how long unipolarity (as a failure of the balance) could obtain. Most answers came down to the question of whether the logic of unipolarity inclined a benign United States to shepherd its resources and ameliorate foreign fears, or whether the U.S. would provoke balancing through unchecked, unnecessary, and threatening superpower intervention.<sup>120</sup>

A single superpower is a simple distribution of power, more akin to bipolarity than to multipolarity. But unlike the clarity and sharpness of conflict in bipolarity, unipolarity is complex and unclear. Where the complex and obfuscatory relations within multipolarity are driven by the difficulty of discerning the changing balance between multiple powers in flexible and mercurial alliances or alignments, unipolarity is unclear because the implications of events, threats, challenges, and outcomes all lie in their future potential rather than in concrete relations in the present. Multipolarity and bipolarity operate in an environment of competition between great powers. The security dilemma is present and pressing on each power as it assesses the relative strengths of its rivals. The stakes inherent in an internal conflict's outcome are measured in terms on their effect on the balance of power. But in unipolarity, the environment is not one of clear and present threat; rather it is one of potential challenges to the unipolar power. Because there are multiple potential rising powers that could

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<sup>119</sup> "The last presidential election was the third in a row in which foreign policy was not seriously discussed by the candidates," and "In the face of perhaps the most profound and widespread upheavals the world has ever seen, [the United States] has failed to develop concepts relevant to the emerging realities." Kissinger (2001), pp. 18–19.

<sup>120</sup> Waltz (1993), Brzezinski (1997), Mastanduno (1997), Wohlforth (1999), Wohlforth (2002), Waltz (2002), Layne (2003), Brzezinski (2004), Pape (2005b), Brooks and Wohlforth (2008), Deudney (2011), Jervis (2011), Ikenberry (2011), Wohlforth (2011), Monteiro (2014).

challenge the unipolar power over the long-term, whether a challenger stands to benefit remains unclear.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, the strategies available to internal factions that desire external support are different, because there is only one power with usable global reach capabilities. Compared to multipolarity or bipolarity, the prospects for attracting decisive extra-regional assistance are extremely limited. Further, there are fewer regional proxies acting on behalf of or in coordination with the superpowers.<sup>122</sup> If one side in an internal conflict can secure the backing of the unipolar power or its allies, there exist few if any options to effectively preserve the other side, giving the unipolar power potentially decisive influence in many internal conflicts should it choose to intervene at the necessary scale.<sup>123</sup>

Because the structure of unipolarity is not one of conflict—either straightforward like bipolarity or complex like multipolarity—the alignment of peripheral states is not an A-or-B question but an open-or-closed question. In bipolarity, Waltz argues that there are no peripheries—i.e. the entire world is politically integrated into the structure of rivalry. In unipolarity, by contrast, the world is politically dis-integrated. Without a superpower sponsor, states that wish to stand against the unipolar power can attempt to construct an alternate system of inter-peripheral connections.<sup>124</sup> One might expect that because of the lack of

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<sup>121</sup> Walt (2011), pp. 114–115.

<sup>122</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 179.

<sup>123</sup> Monteiro (2014), pp. 147, 153.

<sup>124</sup> For example, Hugo Chávez declared an “axis of good” consisting of Latin American countries under New Latin Left leadership, including at different times Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Regime changes are assessed in terms of regime friendliness rather than outright alignment. The ‘Color Revolutions’ and Russian responses—the 2000 Bulldozer Revolution in Serbia, 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, 2005 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, 2008 Russo-Georgian War, 2010 Kyrgyz Revolution, and 2013–2015 Ukrainian Civil War—were all perceived in terms of changing regimes closed to the West or regimes receptive to Western influence.

alignment clarity compared to bipolarity that unipolarity would have a structural proclivity toward formal imperialism. But because unipolarity is not a conflictual structure, informal imperialism remains feasible.<sup>125</sup>

Whereas multipolarity inclines great powers to seek stability in the peripheries and bipolarity creates a proclivity toward the export of instability to the Third World, the structural effect of unipolarity favors superpower disengagement from peripheral instability.<sup>126</sup> Waltz

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<sup>125</sup> Doyle (1986), p. 343.

<sup>126</sup> Waltz explained the logic of great power behavior in a competitive multipolar or bipolar system by using microeconomic oligopoly theory; by analogy, great powers were oligopolistic suppliers of security, where allied and aligned states were security consumers. Waltz (1979), pp. 90–91.

Extending this analogy of security providers and consumers, unipolarity might better be understood through microeconomic monopoly theory. Security provision conceived of as a service produced by a monopoly would have two features: lack of close substitutes (i.e. other states incapable of providing security in the manner the unipolar power could) and price-setting capability (i.e. the unipolar power's military forces and research set the terms for the pursuit of security for the rest of the system). Non-substitutability implies a functional differentiation between the unipolar power and the other units in the system, as the particular undertakings of a hegemon in managing world order are hard to replace.

Waltz argues that order arises spontaneously out of competition and socialization within the 'market' of states, however a monopolistic position is structurally anti-competitive, diminishing one of Waltz's two mechanisms for ensuring the functional likeness of the system's units. Waltz (1979), 74. Socialization is also lessened, because of the high concentration of power:

"[T]he powerful ... have more to say about which games will be played and how. ... [S]trong states ... can afford not to learn"; "The size of the two great powers ... insulates them to a considerable effect from the effects of other states' behavior"; "Absolute gains become more important as competition lessens"; "Units previously alike become functionally distinct as some of them take on system-wide tasks"; "The greater the relative size of a unit the more it identifies its own interest with the interest of the system"; "Units that have a large enough stake in the system will act for its sake, even though they pay unduly for doing so"; and, "The smaller the number of great powers, and the wider the disparities between the few most powerful states and the many others, the more likely the former are to act for the sake of the system and to participate in the management of, or interfere in the affairs of, lesser states." Waltz (1979), 194-195, 197-198, 209. Waltz (2002), p. 60.

Ikenberry, Mastanduno, and Wohlforth writing on unipolarity note that the dominant state has an interest in bearing the costs of providing a stable international order and the provision of public goods. Public goods are susceptible to the 'free rider' problem in which actors can benefit from the production of the public goods without paying the costs of their production. Defense of a bloc or provision of international security is the principal public good extended by superpowers and subject to the free rider problem; Jervis (1997), p. 117.

But if there are enough free riders, the cost of providing public goods may outweigh the benefits for the unipolar power. Despite an interest in maintaining a world order that reflects its values, the unipolar power may even choose to underprovide public goods regardless of free riders, since it does not face structural constraints or competition from a peer. Provision of security will be driven more by cost than by competition. Ikenberry, Mastanduno and Wohlforth (2011), pp. 14–16. Monteiro explains,

Most of the literature on unipolarity... assumes that a preponderant power will one way or another always maintain its "systemic management" role. States, however, only engage in management tasks, such as guaranteeing the maintenance of the status quo, to the extent that doing so serves their own interests. This

asserts that the lack of a true competitor or great power opposition will lead to the overextension of the unipolar power as it engages at will throughout the world. However, there is reason to think that a proclivity toward indiscriminate intervention may not be a structural tendency. Because unipolarity, unlike multipolarity and bipolarity, is a structure without an inbuilt conflict, the unipolar power will calculate the stakes in the outcome of an internal war differently. Many strategies are open to the unipolar power, ranging from isolationism, to offshore balancing, to selective engagement, to ideological engagement (e.g. liberal internationalism, neoconservatism). But, those strategies that do engage the rest of the world do so on the basis of the unipolar power's perceived interest in doing so, rather than on the basis of structural necessity. The structure allows the unipolar power to engage but does not press it to do so.<sup>127</sup>

Underlying the unipolar power's freedom of engagement is the insulation it enjoys from potential rivals. Its combination of military, economic and other power is enough to substantially set it apart from challengers, such that minor losses or gains are not enough to trigger a structural change.<sup>128</sup> Like bipolarity, external balancing is ineffective at decisively shifting the balance of power, because in theory no combination of other great powers could equal the unipolar power. Balancing behavior is focused on internal (or soft) balancing, the

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means the unipole may eschew any systemic management responsibilities if the costs of doing so are greater than the benefits it extracts... Monteiro (2014), p. 63.

Because the structural effect of unipolarity is to make interests and valence unclear, and because of the large margin of power the unipolar power possesses without a peer competitor, even if the threshold for military intervention is low, the threshold for seizing the interest and keeping the focus of the unipolar power is high.

<sup>127</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 178. Monteiro (2014), pp. 5, 63. Walt (2011), pp. 108–109, 115. "Unipolarity's lack of determinism or independent causal weight requires an appeal to other factors to make sense of unipolarity's effects... At a minimum, in each case, it is a conjunction of unipolarity and other factors that together have an impact." Legro (2011), p. 350. While too dismissive of unipolarity, Legro quite correctly notes that indeterminacy is a structural feature of unipolarity. Moreover, he seems to accept the position of this dissertation that structure is not the content of international politics, but rather structure *structures* international politics.

<sup>128</sup> Monteiro (2014), pp. 63, 75.

unipolar power in an attempt to maintain its predominance, and the rival powers in an attempt to de-concentrate political power such that an anti-hegemonic coalition could become viable over time.<sup>129</sup> As such, the military value of allies lies more in the realm of the potential than the actual. And, like under bipolarity, the economic dependence of the unipolar power on any given peripheral state is lesser than one would find in multipolarity, with the exception of key strategic resources.

Superpower disengagement manifests both in arms-length interventions—either through minimal-risk use of force, or use of force mediated through an international institution or large coalition—and through a willingness to leave peripheral outcomes up to negotiation mediated by international institutions rather than to military victory. In the post-Cold War era, humanitarian intervention has become possible precisely because of the removal of structural conflict and the ‘new world order’ de-ideologization of international politics. For the first time since the intervention into the Korean civil war, the UN can act to facilitate collective security, even though it was never intended that the UN intervene in internal conflicts. The international politics of state creation is now centered on institutions that can internationalize the integration of new states into the international community.

The role of ideology in stitching together internal factions and external powers is quite different during unipolarity than during bipolarity or multipolarity. An internal war can still be internationalized by adoption of the ideology of the unipolar power, but there are no ideologies backed by an effective external power that could opportunistically be claimed by the

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<sup>129</sup> Pape (2005b).

opposing side.<sup>130</sup> In many cases, ideology no longer plays a central role in internal wars, because the stakes for external powers are rarely heightened by ideology. Rather because the stakes are judged by the interests of the external power or by humanitarian concerns, there is less

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<sup>130</sup> Extremist Political Islam has been characterized by various scholars and analysts as a revisionist ideological wave on par with the violence that accompanied the Protestant Reformation or the upheaval brought by liberalism exemplified in the Revolutions of 1848. Owen (2010), pp. 5, 10. Al Qaeda and ISIS are transnational ideological actors aiming at regime change and a transcendence of the states-system (in the Islamic world at least). However, unlike Protestantism, liberalism/republicanism, and Marxism, extremist Political Islam is not sponsored by a great power, see Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), p. 427; rather, it receives support from regional powers like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and support from transnational financial donations and volunteers. That Saudi Arabia and Qatar are both military clients of the United States is an irony that should not be lost.

Al Qaeda provides an insight into the link between the low freedom-of-maneuver unipolar structure and internal conflict aiming at regime change. Without the aid of a second superpower, there are few conventional means for finding support against a domestic regime, especially if it is a client of the unipolar power. Betts (2002). Attacking the local sovereigns that maintain the role of the state as client to the unipolar power can serve as an asymmetric means of attacking the strength of the hegemon itself. Jervis (2011), p. 270. Al-Qaeda, conceived of as insurgency, is not centrally directed, but an “inspiration, operational support, and, most importantly, an ideological blueprint.” Newmann (2008).

It is not immediately apparent that Al Qaeda and comparable terrorist networks constitute a transnational, anti-hegemonic, insurgent actor. Michael Scheuer, on the basis of his interpretation of bin Laden and other Al Qaeda leadership statements and internal discussions holds that, “Bin Laden is leading and inspiring a worldwide anti-U.S. insurgency” and that the U.S. misidentifies him as simply a “terrorist.” Robert A. Pape adds to this by demonstrating that Al Qaeda’s principal strategic aim in the employment of suicide terrorism is the removal of U.S. troops from Islamic lands, especially from Saudi Arabia. Although, he further argues against viewing Al Qaeda as a single, transnational force, but instead as a phenomenon occurring in multiple nations linked principally by occupations by democratic powers. Scheuer (2004), pp. 199, 246, and Pape (2005a), pp. 51-58, 114-117. Other works that support this interpretation of Al Qaeda as an insurgency include: Barno (2006): 15-29; Morris (2005); Kilcullen (2005): 597-617; and Bunker (2005), Parts II and III especially.

The idea that acts of internal conflict can damage one enemy by fighting another is spelled out in Mohammed Abd al-Salam Faraj’s ‘near enemy / far enemy’ concept, which he created to emphasize placing priority on attacking the apostate regimes of the Middle East rather than the United States and the West. Al Qaeda and earlier terrorists groups, such as Egypt’s Al Islamiyya, reversed his logic in their attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and other Western targets. While this kind of strategy certainly could have been pursued within the bipolar structure, it would be 1) subsumed within the broader ideological-security frame (i.e. perceiving global terrorism as being directed from Moscow), and 2) would not be the principal viable method of challenging a polar power due to the existence of a rival polar state that could maintain a symmetric challenge. Jansen and Faraj (1986).

The structural bias of this dissertation’s theory is revealed in dismissing extremist Political Islam as a revolutionary wave on par with Protestantism, liberalism, and Marxism because it lacks a great power sponsor. In the future this position may stand in need of revision, although it is not immediately apparent when internal wars motivated by Islam ought to begin to be coded as part of a specific wave of extremist Political Islam: 1989 with the founding of Al Qaeda; 1979 with the Islamic Revolution in Iran, rise of pan-Islamism, and the mujahedeen in Afghanistan; further back, with Sayyid Qutb and Islamic resistance to colonialism in the 1950s–1960s; or, perhaps all the way back to the 1810s with Imam Shamil and the Russian Empire’s Caucasian Wars.

pragmatic gain from claiming an ideological position.<sup>131</sup> With the close of the Cold War, and the ‘new world order’ de-ideologization of East-West politics promulgated by Gorbachev and Bush Sr., external powers have ceased to impose an ideological interpretation upon internal factions.<sup>132</sup> And while ethnic conflict predated the end of the Cold War, it only became the predominant category for understanding internal conflicts with the Cold War’s end.<sup>133</sup> Many observers in academia and policy perceived an explosion in ethnic conflicts after 1991, but in reality were witnessing the de-ideologization of international (and in some ways internal) politics.

#### *EXPECTED STRUCTURAL EFFECTS OF UNIPOLARITY*

- U1. The lack of inherent core conflict will result in superpower disengagement from the peripheries.
- U2. Whether the superpower or potential rising power stands to benefit from events or outcomes in the periphery is often unclear.
- U3. Intervention may support the state or the rebels, but will most likely be done at arms length or through an institution or coalition.

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<sup>131</sup> The political possibility of justifying intervention on the basis of “humanitarianism” is another manifestation of unipolarity’s structure lacking inherent conflict. Multipolarity and bipolarity, as structures with an inbuilt rivalry or conflict, have a higher threshold for disinterestedness than does unipolarity. Finnemore argued that humanitarian intervention during multipolarity was rare, thinner, and not based on universalistic notions of human rights, but on exclusive ethnic or religious identities. During bipolarity, humanitarian intervention, even when performed by non-superpowers, was deemed illegitimate because of the broader Cold War. Because humanitarian motivations could often serve as a mask for security or economic interests, humanitarian intervention has not been seen as legitimate until recently.

For arguments on disinterestedness or ulterior motives during multipolarity, see Vincent’s discussion of Cobden, Mill, Kant, and Mazzini; Vincent (1974), pp. 49–59; and Weber (1995). See also Finnemore (2003), pp. 64–65, 80. During bipolarity, see Finnemore (2003), Chapter 3, and Vincent (1974), Chapter 5.

<sup>132</sup> On the ‘new world order,’ see Gorbachev (1988), Johnson (1988), Bush (1990), Curtius (1990), Waller *et al.* (1990), Gwyn (1990), Kaplan (1990), and Judis (1990).

<sup>133</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 174.

- U4. Internal factions have very limited freedom of maneuver when appealing for assistance.
- U5. Informal imperialism is feasible as a method for the superpower to manage peripheral clients.
- U6. Ideology is of little significance in affecting the link between the superpower and its co-ideological affiliates.
- U7. The superpower's disengagement will manifest in an internationalization of the political integration of newly created states.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding polarity is necessary for any broad understanding of the place and character of internal war as a phenomenon in international politics. There is a significant external element to internal war that has been undertheorized thus far in political science scholarship. While it is intuitive to hold that civil wars occurring during the Cold War had a different character than post-Cold War civil wars, what is missing is a formal understanding of why such differences exist and what mechanisms cause that difference.

This theory puts forward a clear account of how international politics affects internal war, and how different systemic structures change the relationship between international politics and internal war. Using system structural shifts to periodize modern international history allows us to group internal wars and test whether those groups are significantly different from each other. The internal wars occurring during the era of European colonial power multipolarity faced a very different external political context than those that occurred within Cold War superpower competition or within the post-Cold War “new world order.”



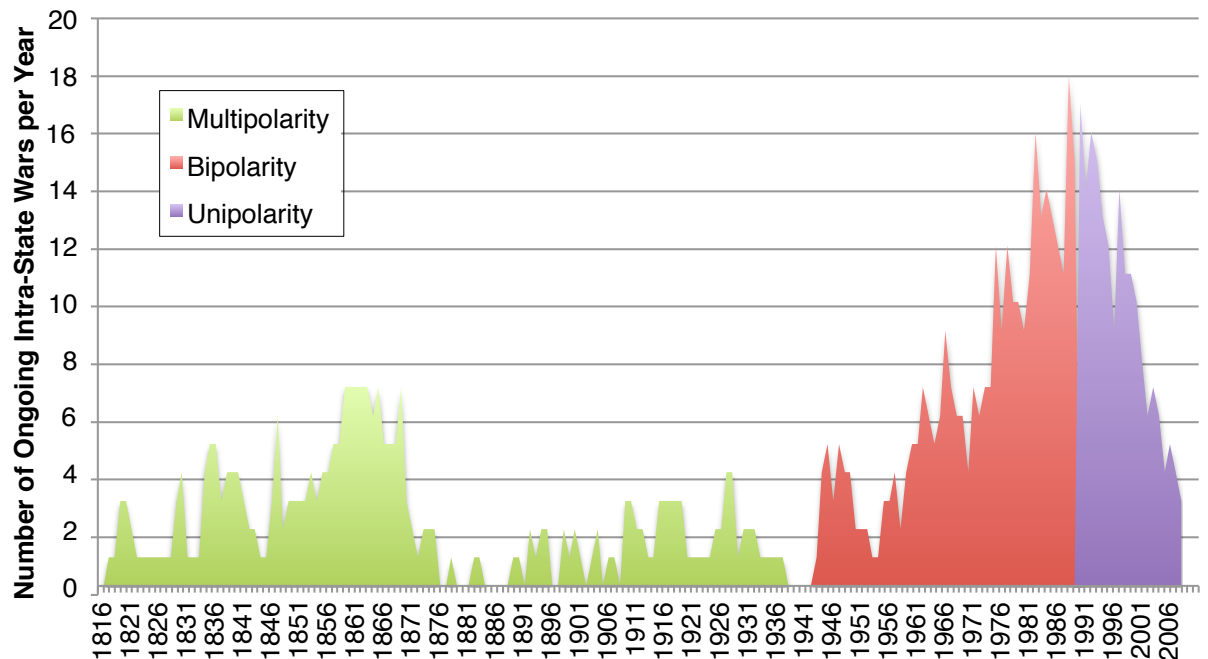
Great power interests, internal faction interests, the interests and identities created by transnational political ideology, and the unique circumstances faced by waves of new states are all aspects of international politics that affect the character of internal war. The meaning of each of these elements is structured by the distribution of power in the international system. Understanding internal war thus requires understanding the structural constraints within which internal war occurs. Multipolarity fosters the most conservative relationship between international politics and internal war. Bipolarity intensifies the relationship between international politics and internal war, producing the longest, bloodiest, and most ideological internal wars. Unipolarity produces neither extreme, but it allows for less conflictual resolution of internal wars than other polarities.

The effects of polarity across periods in international history should be testable across the population of cases of intra-state war (and extra-state war), demonstrating that the expected broad patterns obtain. Case studies drawn from within each period ought to demonstrate that the patterns observed are due to the mechanisms and structural effects outlined in this chapter. The following chapters examine the datasets on internal war for the expected patterns, and then examine the historical record for evidence of the divergent effects of different polarities.

# The Patterns of Internal War

## CHAPTER THREE

### Incidence of Intra-State Wars (1816–2009)



Why does the incidence of civil war over the course of the past two hundred years seem to follow the familiar turning points of world politics? If the course and character of internal upheaval are determined principally by domestic factors – defects of the regime type or political transitions, economic and resource distribution problems, deep-seated ethnic or religious

antagonisms – we would not expect the broad patterns of civil war to align with major turning points in the international political balance. Indeed, if the historical record does not show politically significant changes to the phenomenon of civil war from period to period, then we should reject the theory advanced in the previous chapter.

The theory makes two major claims. First, that internal war is not a wholly internal phenomenon. International politics has a significant effect on the incidence and intensity of internal war, even in the absence of direct interventions. Second, that the polarity of the international system structures the effect of international politics upon internal wars.<sup>1</sup>

Different polarities should produce internal wars with a different character. These claims can be assessed against the historical record of internal wars along a number of variables representing incidence and intensity: onsets, duration, battle deaths, incidence, and terminations. We can also examine the structuring effect of polarity, not just on security interests, but also polarity's interaction with transnational political ideology and new state creation.

This chapter analyzes intra-state war datasets to demonstrate that the polarity of the international system *does* have a significant structuring effect on international politics as it has affected the character of internal war over the past two hundred years.

*Multipolarity* is expected to produce the most conservative character for internal war. Uncertainty among the great powers leads to a stability preference regarding revolution and the peripheries. The data on intra-state war confirms that the multipolar period saw the lowest rate of onset, the shortest average duration, infrequent intervention, and low average battle deaths

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<sup>1</sup> Here I am using 'system,' 'structure,' and 'polarity' as defined by Waltz (1979). See also Buzan, Little, and Jones (1993), and Jervis (1998).

despite military victory (as opposed to negotiated peace) being the principal mode of terminating conflicts. Because revisionist ideologies are destabilizing, and because of the great power stability preference, ideological conflicts during multipolarity were shorter than non-ideological conflicts. And, despite creation of almost seventy new states during this period, “weak” new states did not contribute significantly to the overall onset of civil war, nor did they attract external interventions. However, the relative lack of internal war during multipolarity can be partially explained by the “accounting” error that formal imperialism introduces by separating conflicts over sovereignty into intra-state and extra-state wars (i.e. civil wars and colonial wars).

*Bipolarity* is expected to produce the most intense environment for internal war. The superpower standoff led to the export of instability to the peripheries and the search for advantage through Third World alignment. Bipolarity saw the highest rate of onset, intervention longest average duration, and highest average battle deaths. Ideology in bipolarity had the opposite effect that it had during multipolarity, increasing the duration, battle death, and external intervention. It also featured the highest proportion of ideological internal wars. Almost ninety new states were created over the course of the second wave of decolonization. New states created during bipolarity were more prone to internal conflict than those created during multipolarity or unipolarity. Both the sheer number of new states created in such a short period and the rush to neutralize newly created states during bipolarity meant that new “weak” state civil wars were a greater proportion of overall civil wars than in other periods.

*Unipolarity* is expected to produce a permissive environment for internal war, neither conservative nor extreme, characterized principally by the attempted depoliticization of the periphery. Onsets, duration, battle deaths, and interventions all lay between the lows of

multipolarity and the highs of bipolarity. Unipolarity sees an early spike in terminations as the backlog of ongoing internal wars from the bipolar period are quickly resolved. Further, the proportion of negotiated peace accords and ceasefires doubles in unipolarity relative to military victories. This is accompanied by a precipitous drop in the number of ideological conflicts. And despite the concern over “weak” states in the post-Cold War era, new states created during unipolarity have been no more or less prone to collapse into civil war, and new state conflicts make up a small proportion of the overall number of onsets.

In sum, examination of the historical record provides strong support for the idea that the international system’s polarity has a structuring effect on the character of internal war. The data reveals that the expected patterns emerge across a number of different variables due to the effects of polarity (or the interaction effects of polarity and ideology). It will be the task of case studies in the subsequent chapters to determine whether the broad patterns found in the aggregate data are actually the result of the hypothesized processes and effects.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. First, I will briefly explain the data sources, coding, and methodology. Second, the chapter will proceed with an examination of internal war onset and new state creation. Third, it will investigate duration and the interaction between polarity with ideology. Fourth, it will give an overview of changes to internal war termination. Fifth, it will look at patterns in intervention and battle deaths. And finally, it will conclude with a summary of the findings.

## Methodology

Three datasets were used to examine the patterns in internal war: Kristian Gleditsch's revision to the Correlates of War dataset;<sup>2</sup> Gleditsch and Ward's system membership dataset;<sup>3</sup> and, the UCDP Conflict Terminations dataset.<sup>4</sup> Correlates of War (COW), although the standard dataset for many investigations into conflict, was not used because of its narrow criteria for system membership and its over-categorization of conflicts. To count as a member of the pre-UN international system, COW includes recognition by both Britain and France as a criterion.<sup>5</sup> Because some political units were not treated as states by the European colonial powers, their internal wars are either excluded from COW thereby leaving pre-WWII data thin, or instead categorized as extra-state or non-state wars.<sup>6</sup> Gleditsch and Ward put forward a revised system membership list to correct some of the exclusions, and Gleditsch's internal war dataset is based on the revised list of states. To supplement Gleditsch's outcome data, Joakim Kreutz's UCDP Conflict Termination 2010 dataset was used. The UCDP definition of war was devised to be compatible with the COW project.<sup>7</sup> Since Gleditsch's dataset is based on both COW and UCDP/PRIO data, using the UCDP Conflict Termination dataset alongside the Gleditsch dataset should be unproblematic.

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<sup>2</sup> Version 2.0, updated 5 November 2013; based on Gleditsch (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Version 5.1, updated 14 March 2013; based on Gleditsch & Ward (1999) although with some alterations discussed here: [http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst\\_casedesc.pdf](http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/iisyst_casedesc.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Kreutz (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Sarkees & Wayman (2010), Chapter 1.

<sup>6</sup> Gleditsch (2004). For a longer discussion of the problems with the COW system membership list, see Fazal (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Gleditsch (2004), p. 239. Although, UCDP counts conflicts with as low as 25 battle deaths, as opposed to COW's threshold of 1000 battle deaths.

To examine the prevalence of transnational political ideologies' involvement in internal war, I extended Gleditsch's dataset<sup>8</sup> by coding each conflict in the dataset as ideological or not if it met any of three criteria:

1. One of the factions or parties to the internal conflict was explicitly ideological (e.g. identified as a Marxist-Leninist party);
2. One of the leaders explicitly expressed an ideological affiliation or goal either in starting the conflict or during the conflict; or,
3. One of the central issues of the conflict was tied inherently an ideological affiliation (e.g. conflicts fought over the demand for a constitution during the 1800s were almost always understood in terms of liberalism).

These are admittedly broad criteria that aim to capture not just those conflicts genuinely begun over ideological issue or by partisans of a certain ideology, but also those conflicts that during their course saw an opportunistic adoption of an ideological positions as a means of signaling to outside powers or attracting external support. For my purposes, it is less important to determine whether conflicts were genuinely ideological or whether the conflicts were even primarily ideological (as opposed to ethnic, religious, or resources/power-seeking), than it is to determine whether or not the prevailing international politics affected the character or course of the internal war.

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<sup>8</sup> The Center for Systemic Peace's Political Instability Task Force does produce dataset for four kinds of internal conflict: adverse regime changes, ethnic wars, genocides/politicide, and revolutionary wars. However, their data only goes as far back as 1955, and their coding of what counts as a conflict as significantly different enough from K. Gleditsch that using their data might present compatibility problems or introduce biases. See Marshall, Gurr & Harff (2009).

Where appropriate, I have used inferential statistics to test the differences found when comparing internal wars occurring in different periods. I began with two reservations about using inferential statistics: first, the datasets are ostensibly population data, not samples from which I could infer about the population; and second, the data violate most of the assumptions necessary to perform parametric inferential statistical tests. However, the substantial expansion of the number of internal wars between COW versions 3.0 and 4.0 and between Gleditsch's versions 1.52 and 2.0 leads me to believe that even more internal wars will be added in the coming years to the total population recognized in our standard datasets.<sup>9</sup> Comprehensive though they are, the datasets we have today in all likelihood do not encompass the true population of internal wars.

The internal war data examined here are not suited for parametric inferential statistics.<sup>10</sup> The samples being compared are not randomly selected. The samples (and their theoretical population) are so skewed as to not even be close to normally distributed even when transformed. It could be argued (although I do not think it is persuasive) that some of the observations are not independent, given the spillover, bad-neighbors, and recidivism effects that connect some civil wars. The number of observations in each sample are of unequal proportions. And, the variances of the samples are too different, where one sample will often be more than double the variance of another. Nevertheless, it may still be helpful to be able to test whether an observed difference across periods could simply be explained by chance.

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<sup>9</sup> In 2000, COW 3.0 listed 213 intra-state wars, but by 2010's COW 4.0 had expanded to 335 intra-state wars, an increase of almost 60%. In Singer & Small's original COW dataset, only 106 intra-state wars were counted; see Sarkees & Wayman (2010), p. 337. In 2007, Gleditsch's Expanded War Data 1.52 listed 336 civil war conflicts, but by 2010 Gleditsch's version 2.0 listed 466 conflicts, an increase of almost 40%.

<sup>10</sup> Despite my reservations about parametric statistical tests, their use nevertheless dominates the civil war literature produced by comparativists, see: Sambanis (2002), Hegre & Sambanis (2006), Bleaney & Dimico (2009), and Licklider (1998).



Therefore, I have used the Kruskal-Wallis  $H$ -test, Mann-Whitney  $U$ -test, Pearson's Chi-Squared Test for Independence, and Fisher's  $z$  Transformation Test to examine whether or not an observed difference in a given internal war variable across polarities is systematic (i.e. statistically distinguishable from chance). These tests are nonparametric, meaning that although the data violates the above assumptions necessary for parametric inferential statistics, the nonparametric tests do not rely on these assumptions (except for independence) about the data in order to produce valid results. However, nonparametric tests are less powerful than parametric tests and consequently have a greater chance of producing a type II error (failing to recognize a significant difference). I am more comfortable with reporting only clearly significant results and missing less significant differences than I am in reporting every "significant" result from an illegitimately applied parametric test and running the risk of delivering false positives.

The years for each period of polarity have been defined as follows: multipolarity from 1816–1943; bipolarity from 1944–1991; and, unipolarity from 1992–2010. Bipolarity is dated from 1944 instead of 1945 in order to capture the onset of the Greek Civil War in the bipolar period rather than the multipolar period.

I have included a statistical appendix at the end of the chapter where the tests results are reported in detail. Because grouping the data by polarity does not constitute testing random samples, the appendix also includes the same tests performed on randomized groupings of the data. Finally, the appendix contains a table listing my extensions of the Gleditsch dataset.

## Onset & New States

The first piece of the puzzle in understanding the patterns of incidence is the rate of internal war onset: how many internal wars are starting per year; and how many internal wars are there relative to the overall number of states in the international system? As we will see, there is a significant change in the rate of onset from period to period as the balance of power changes. Bipolarity features a higher rate of internal war per year than either multipolarity or unipolarity, in part because the structure of conflict in bipolarity gives the two superpowers incentives to support upheaval abroad, and because internal factions considering their chances for attracting assistance are aware of those incentives.

As reviewed in Chapter 1, there is already a great deal of scholarship examining and testing the correlates of onset. Hegre & Sambanis and Bleaney & Dimico have performed meta-analyses of onset studies, testing an extremely broad swath of variables.<sup>11</sup> But studies using correlates such as population size, income level, economic growth, ethnic configuration, mountainous or forested terrain, and natural resources are akin to locating the cause of a conflict in the topography of battlefields. Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner (2007) advance the “‘feasibility hypothesis’ that where civil war is feasible it will occur without reference to motivation.”<sup>12</sup> Lichbach and Davenport (2003) critique a similar argument from Fearon and Laitin (2003) and the broader quantitative internal war literature, writing, “In sum, this

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<sup>11</sup> Hegre and Sambanis tested: ethnolinguistic fractionalization & ethnic heterogeneity, ethnic polarization, level of democracy, inconsistency of political institutions (anocracy), political instability, political system, political centralization, neighborhood political economy, regional patterns, neighboring war, GDP growth, economic (trade) policy, social welfare indicators, natural and raw material resources, topographical features of the state, militarization of the state, temporal patterns (by decade and post-Cold War), and post-WWII colonial warfare. Hegre & Sambanis (2006).

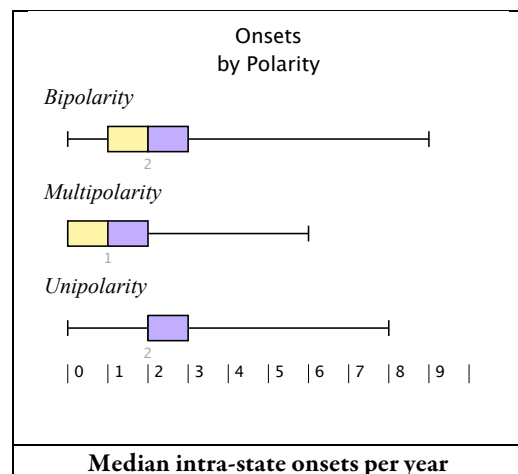
Bleaney and Dimico tested: per capita real GDP, population, ethnic diversity, political institutions (anocracy), natural resources, geographical features, and temporal (Cold War) and regional (Sub-Saharan Africa) patterns. Bleaney & Dimico (2009).

<sup>12</sup> Collier, Hoeffler & Rohner (2007).

literature tries to explain civil wars without actually looking at other internal wars present in the country. The models are oblivious to the specific conflicts and contentious politics whose dynamics might ultimately drive the outbreak of a civil war.”<sup>13</sup> If war is a continuation of politics by other means then these studies examine politics *ex* politics.

A second major weakness of existing onset studies is their limited frame of reference. Because of their focus on finding correlations between civil war datasets and other proxy variable datasets, most quantitative studies focus on the post-WWII era (for which there is more data) to the exclusion of earlier civil wars. With the exception of COW and Gleditsch’s revision to COW, all major datasets on internal war begin at or around WWII.<sup>14</sup> As will be demonstrated, the Cold War era is an anomalous period in the history of civil wars globally. Yet most studies’ observations are dominated by Cold War-era data, making the post-Cold War era appear to be the outlier in need of explanation—hence the academic debate over “new and old wars.”<sup>15</sup> By expanding the time frame to back to include post-Napoleonic wars, and by periodizing the data according to major shifts in the distribution of power, a substantially different picture of internal war onset emerges.

Charting onsets using the Gleditsch data illustrates the stark changes in the frequency of internal war as the international distribution of

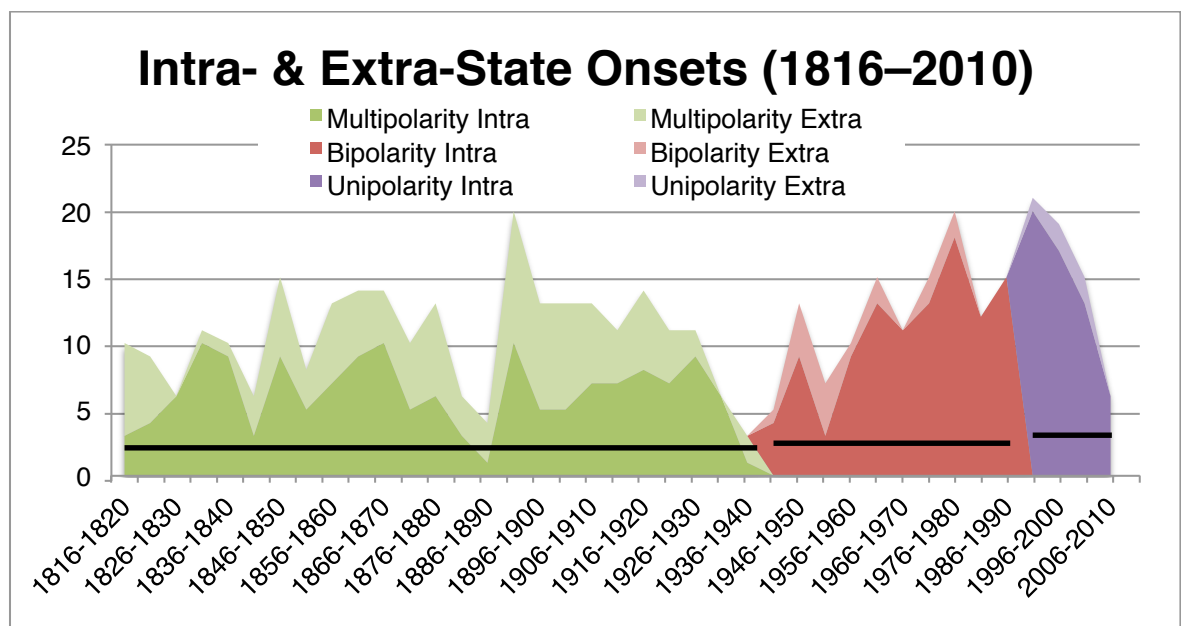
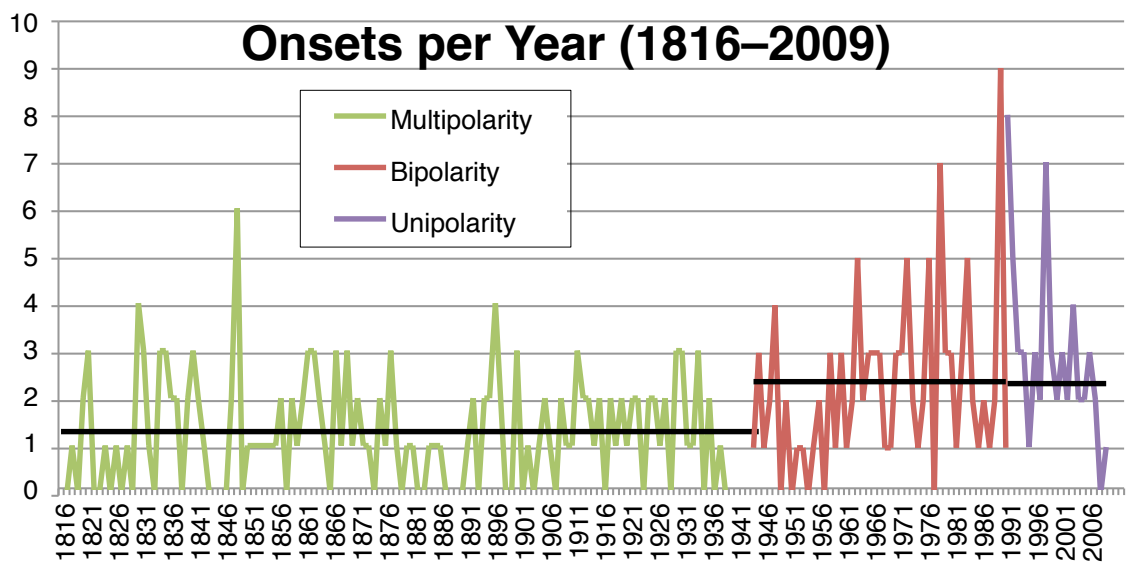


<sup>13</sup> Lichbach, Davenport & Armstrong II (2003).

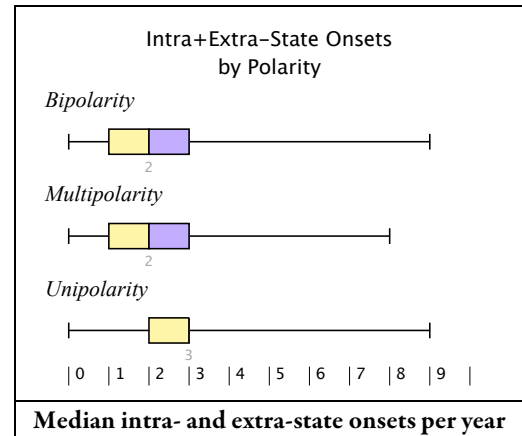
<sup>14</sup> Datasets starting around WWII include those produced by: Center for Systemic Peace, Political Instability Task Force, Center for the Study of Civil War, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Fearon & Laitin, Anke Hoeffler, Minorities at Risk, Patrick Regan, SHERFACS, and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview, see: Kalyvas (2001), Melander, Öberg & Hall (2009).

power changes. Multipolarity is clearly different from bipolarity and unipolarity: the era of European colonialism featured a median onset of only one internal war per year, whereas both bipolarity and unipolarity see a median onset of two internal wars per year. One can clearly see certain major international events reflected in the spikes: the liberal revolutions of 1848 are the highest peak in multipolarity, an interregnum marking WWII, and another set of peaks signaling the end of the Cold War and breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

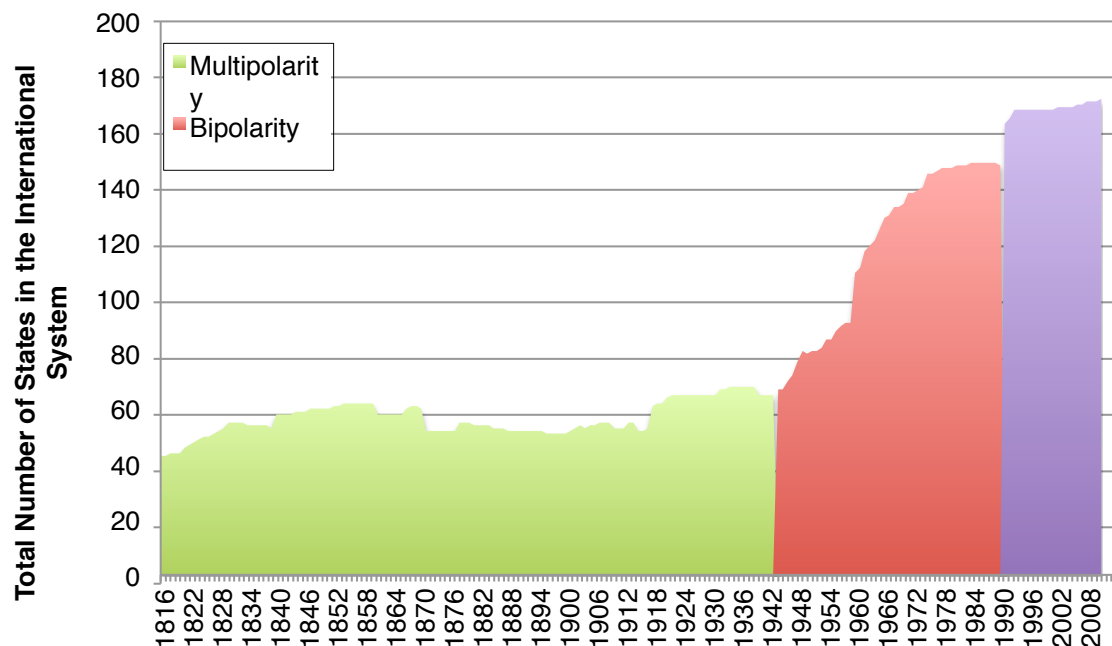


The raw rate of onset should be examined relative to two other factors. First, the low number of internal wars during multipolarity may be explained by the “accounting” problem posed by formal imperialism. Wars over sovereignty may be hidden as extra-state (i.e. colonial) wars during the

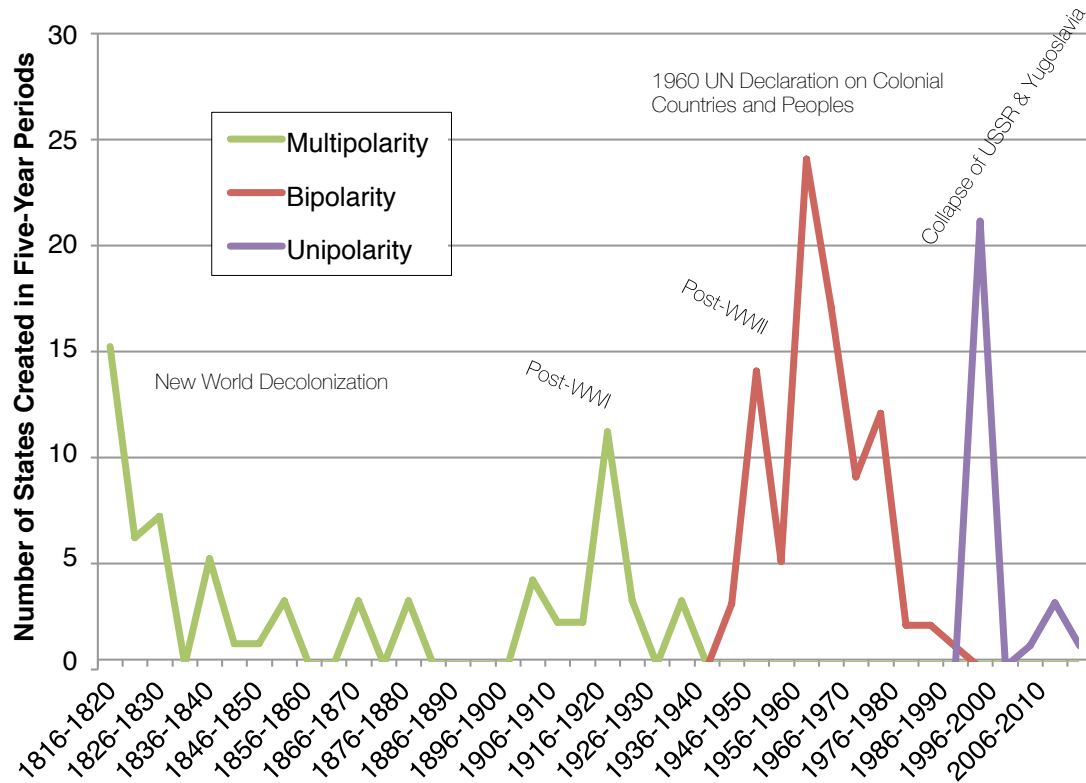


era of European colonialism. By looking only at recognized states, we exclude most of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, areas that are included in bipolarity and unipolarity. By including both the intra-state and extra-state wars in the Gleditsch dataset the median number of onsets during multipolarity rises from one to two, and its rate of onset is no longer statistically differentiable from bipolarity and unipolarity.

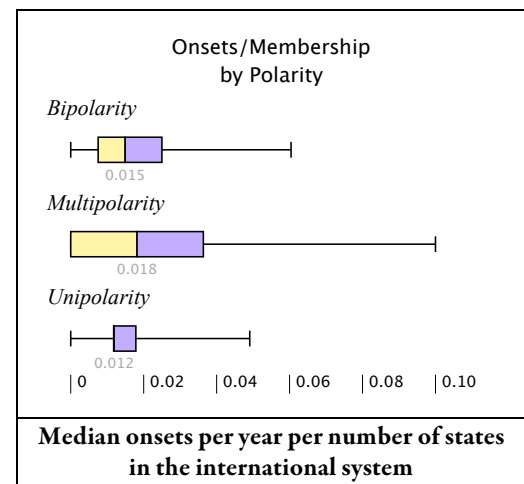
## System Membership (1816–2011)



## State Creation per Five-Year Period



Second, the creation of new states may have an effect on the number of internal wars—intuitively, more states means more civil wars. Multipolarity saw the creation or recognition of 69 new states into the system (along with a number of state deaths, mostly coming in the form of national unifications), while bipolarity experienced 89 new states entering the system as a result of the second wave of decolonization, and unipolarity has seen 26 new states principally from the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The total



membership of the international system quadrupled from 43 to 172 over the last two centuries.<sup>16</sup> The percentage of states suffering an internal war onset in any given year (i.e. onsets ÷ total system membership) remained at an average of about 2%, with no significant difference across periods.

If state creation is central to understanding the rate of internal war onset, we are then led to ask whether or not new states are “weak” in ways that make them more prone to descend into civil war than already established states. We may also wonder whether the international politics of new states—the Monroe Doctrine exclusion during multipolarity, Cold War “neutralizations” during bipolarity, and international institutionalism during unipolarity—has an effect or not on the “weakness” of new states. Fearon & Laitin tested new state weakness and argued that over the 1945–1999 period states were 5.25 times likelier to experience a civil war during their first two years of independence.<sup>17</sup> But, as with my above criticism of existing civil war scholarship, the Fearon & Laitin dataset draws almost entirely from bipolarity, adding on the first few years of unipolarity, and excluding all data from multipolarity. The anomalous period of bipolarity serves as the bulk of their data, biasing their account of new state weakness.

Using the Gleditsch dataset to extend the investigation of new states to the past two hundred years, we can see that by sampling only bipolarity and a portion of unipolarity, Fearon & Laitin missed the dearth of new state wars throughout the much longer period of multipolarity. Fearon & Laitin used the first two years of independence to define a “new” state, but if we adopt a more expansive criterion for the critical period of state-building and instead

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<sup>16</sup> The Gleditsch and Ward system membership dataset excludes microstates (population less than 250,000), which accounts for the difference between their total of 172 and the total membership of the United Nations (currently 193 + 2 observer states). Gleditsch & Ward (1999).

<sup>17</sup> Fearon & Laitin (2003), p. 85.

define “new” as within the first fifteen years of independence, a very different picture emerges of new state wars. During bipolarity, nearly 2.5 times as many wars were new state wars compared to multipolarity, despite bipolarity only having 1.5 times the proportion of new states as a percentage of all states. The massive and rapid

	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
New states experiencing internal war within 2 years	2	7	4
As a % of all intra-state wars	1.3%	6.5%	7.1%
New states experiencing internal war within 15 years	12	20	5
As a % of all intra-state wars	7.7%	18.7%	8.9%
New-state-years as a % of all state-years <sup>18</sup>	14.3%	24%	11%
If new states were driving the onset of internal war, we would expect <i>new state wars as a percentage of all internal wars</i> to be equal to or higher than <i>new-state-years as a percentage of all state-years</i> per period. However, new state wars make up a smaller proportion of internal wars than we would expect, if new states were to have the same yearly rate of onset as established states.			
New states created	69	89	26
New state wars as a % of new states created	17.4%	22.5%	19.2%
The number of new state wars during unipolarity is too small to generalize about.			

expansion of the membership of the international system over the course of bipolarity accounts for part, but not all, of its higher rate of onsets than multipolarity. New states are about 30% more prone to descend into internal war during bipolarity compared to new states during multipolarity. In general, they do not seem to be at higher risk of internal war than established states, in fact quite the reverse: the percentage of all internal wars that are new state wars is smaller across all periods than the percentage of states that are new states. New states cause disproportionately fewer internal wars.

<sup>18</sup> State-years are the number of states multiplied by the number of years in a period, giving an idea of how many onsets one could expect with a yearly onset rate. New-state-years are the number of new states created in a period multiplied by fifteen. We can then compare the onset rate for new states against existing states, contrasted with the number of state-years in which a civil war could have begun either in a new state or in an established state.



The Gleditsch onset data and Gleditsch & Ward system membership data give partial support to the theoretical expectations that bipolarity would feature the highest rate of onset while multipolarity would face the lowest. Onsets *are* higher in bipolarity than in multipolarity – 2.24 onsets per year compared to 1.21 onsets per year – but these differences fade away when we account either for colonial wars being hidden in the “extra-state wars” category or when we normalize the rate of onset against the number of states in the system. The vast expansion of the international system brought about by the second wave of decolonization erases most of the effect bipolarity appeared to have on onsets. But examination of new state creation revealed that while new states in general are less prone to internal war, new states born in bipolarity were disproportionately more conflict prone than new states born in multipolarity. This effect is expected by the theory—the shift from multipolarity to bipolarity saw a transition from formal imperialism to informal imperialism, and the international politics of newly created states changed from exclusion to neutralization—both changes made the affiliation of new states the object of superpower contention.

Understanding how internal war onsets are structured by polarity is an important part of the puzzle explaining why the incidence and character of internal war over the past 200 years seems to track the major shifts in international politics. However, even the increase in onsets that accompanied bipolarity is not enough to explain the massive increase in incidence over the Cold War. Moreover, the onset data cannot explain the precipitous drop in incidence following the collapse of the USSR, because onsets during unipolarity are just as high as during bipolarity. To gain more insight into the relationship between the balance of power and

internal war, we must next investigate internal war duration and its interaction with polarity and ideology.

## **Duration & Ideology**

Polarity's clearest effect in structuring the character of internal war is revealed by examining the duration of civil wars. Bipolarity features the longest civil wars while multipolarity (despite some long outliers) features the shortest civil wars. Even more interesting is the interaction between transnational political ideology and polarity in its effect on duration. Whereas in bipolarity ideological civil wars are much longer than non-ideological conflicts, in multipolarity the opposite is true, with much shorter ideological upheavals than non-ideological wars. While ideology's effect on internal war is independent of the distribution of power, polarity nevertheless structures what type of effect ideology has on the duration of internal war. These insights help us explain why internal war incidence ramped up over the course of bipolarity—it was not driven primarily by increased onsets but by increased duration. This also explains why multipolarity and unipolarity have different incidence: in multipolarity, incidence does not increase over time because ideology does not increase conflict duration; in unipolarity, despite a similar rate of onset to bipolarity, the de-ideologization of great power politics allows for a precipitous drop in incidence as duration falls and leftover conflicts are finally resolved.

Existing literature on internal war duration suffers from the same problems as the onsets scholarship discussed above: apolitical correlates and a truncated timespan. A wide array of variables have been tested, and again the principal focus remains on apolitical internal

correlates linked to feasibility.<sup>19</sup> There is, however, a greater amount of literature specifically on duration that examines transnational or international political factors, but these studies are limited by a post-WWII timeframe and by lack of systemic approach.<sup>20</sup> For example, Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom find that a dummy variable representing civil wars with their onset after 1980 is significant in predicting a 2.5–3 times increase in duration, but with only a speculation about international arms and illicit resources markets to attempt to make sense of this result. Mason, Weingarten & Fett, looking at the 1945–1992 time period, find that longer duration civil wars (of the type predominant in the later stages of the Cold War) had a higher chance of a negotiated settlement rather than a military victory, and while they note the important effect of the end of the Cold War, it is not represented in their model or their dataset.

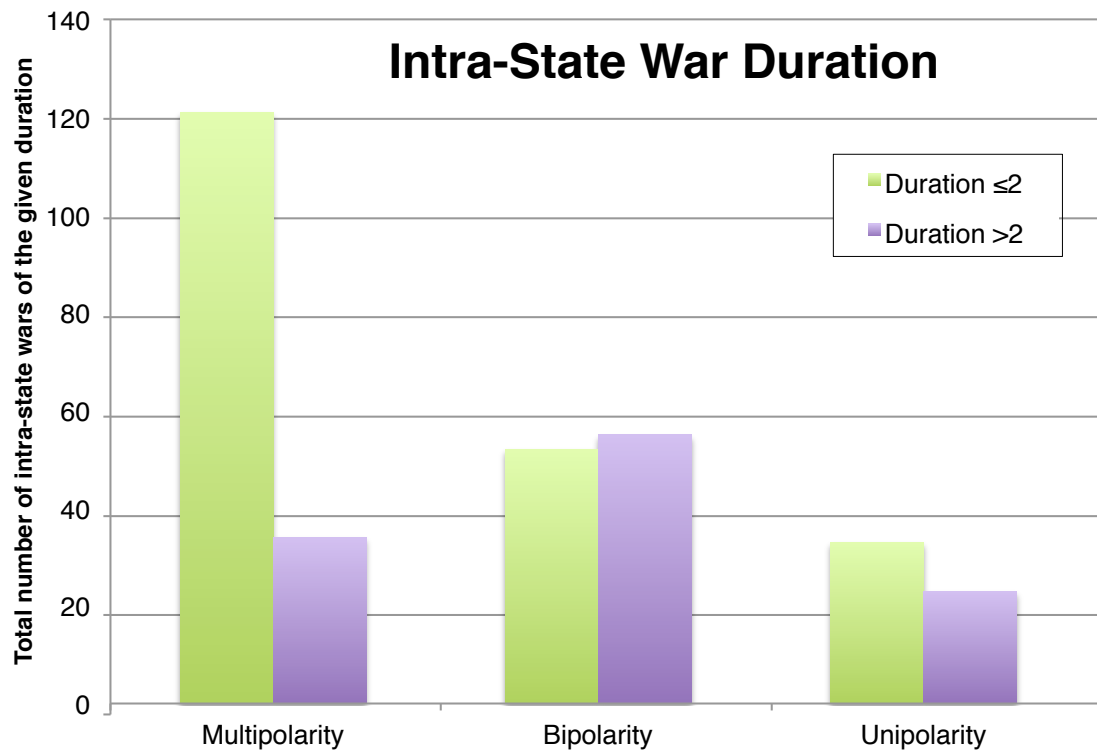
Using the Gleditsch dataset to examine internal war duration over the past two hundred years reveals substantial differences in duration as we move from multipolarity to bipolarity to unipolarity. The first significant feature is that most internal wars across the three periods are brief. The majority of internal wars last fewer than two years: 206 intra-state wars are shorter than 2 years long, while only 112 intra-state wars last two or more years. But when we separate the civil wars by polarity, the prevalence of long wars is clearly different as the

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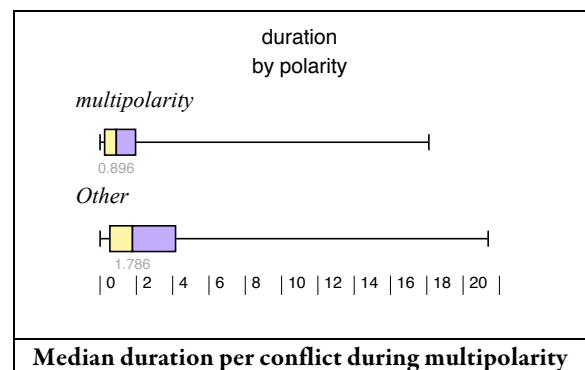
<sup>19</sup> Among the variables considered significant by different authors: extensive forest cover, the presence of mountains, lootable or valuable resources (diamonds, drugs, gold), being located in Africa, the distance of rebels from the government, location of insurgency near a remote international border, rough terrain, number of large ethno-linguistic or religious groups, the level of democracy, and the efficiency of the state's bureaucracy. See Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom (2004), Berdol & Malone (2000), Ross (2004), de Rouen & Sobek (2004), Buhaug, Gates & Lujala (2009), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), and Sambanis (2000). For a broader overview, see Hegre (2004).

<sup>20</sup> Variables examined include: transnational actors, diaspora groups, intervention (on the side of the state or the rebels), as well as UN interventions specifically. See for example, Gleditsch (2007), Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000), Regan (2000), Florea (2012), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom (2004), and de Rouen & Sobek (2004). Other political variables examined include: level of democracy, veto players, and the military balance of power between the rebels and government. See Sambanis (2000), Cunningham (2006), and Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan (2009).

international balance of power shifts. During multipolarity there are 3.5 times as many short wars as there are longer wars. During unipolarity there are about 40% more short wars than long wars. But during bipolarity long wars actually outnumber short wars: 55 long to 52 short.

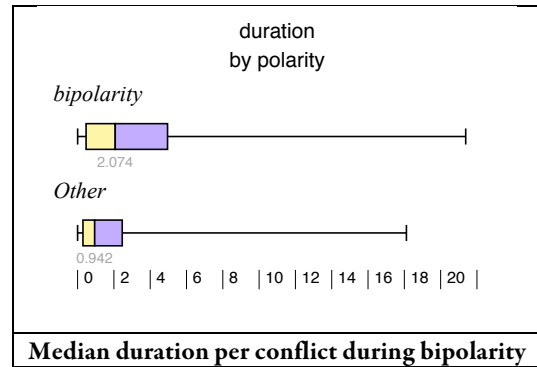


Despite several very long outliers—the 1836–1852 Chechen Resistance, the 1850–1866 Taiping Movement, the 1854–1872 Han-Miao War, and the 1856–1872 Han-Pathay War—the average length of internal



wars during multipolarity was just under eleven months. Conversely, during bipolarity the average internal war lasted just over two years. Civil wars during unipolarity were in-between at one-and-a-half years on average. Both the duration decrease during multipolarity and the

duration increase during bipolarity are statistically significant. (Additionally, if extra-state wars are included alongside the intra-state wars to correct for the “accounting error” that formal imperialism introduces into the study of internal wars, the differences observed here across polarities are reinforced.)

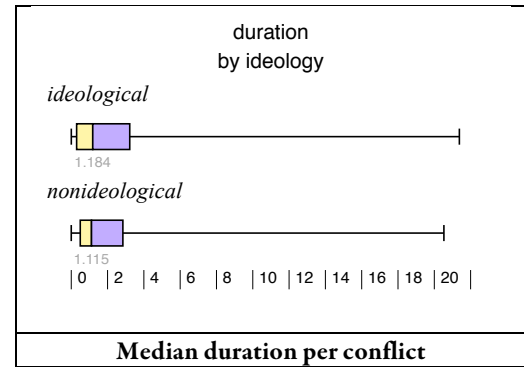


This result lends support to the method of analyzing internal war by historical epoch, and backs the theoretical expectations that multipolarity would feature shorter wars while bipolarity would feature the longest. The flexibility and instability of core alignments during multipolarity lead to a stability preference in the peripheries, whereas the tense superpower standoff in bipolarity leads to the export of instability to the Third World.

But this distinction between multipolarity and bipolarity begs the question of ideology. Wasn't the multipolar period inaugurated by the establishment of the conservative anti-revolutionary Concert of Europe? Wasn't the multipolar period characterized by liberal and republican revolution from New World decolonization to the Revolutions of 1848? Weren't socialism, communism, anarchism, and fascism associated with upheaval beginning in the late 1800s through WWII and the end of multipolarity? Certainly the Cold War was just as much defined by the competition between liberalism and communism as it was by the bipolar distribution of power.<sup>21</sup> We must then investigate which factor is doing the heavy lifting, ideology or polarity, and how these factors interact to shape the duration of internal wars.

<sup>21</sup> Parsing out what the central issue at stake during the Cold War was, see Meuller (2004–05).

Examined on its own, ideology seems to have a counterintuitive effect on internal war duration. When all periods are taken together, ideological civil wars last an average of one month longer than non-ideological civil war, but this



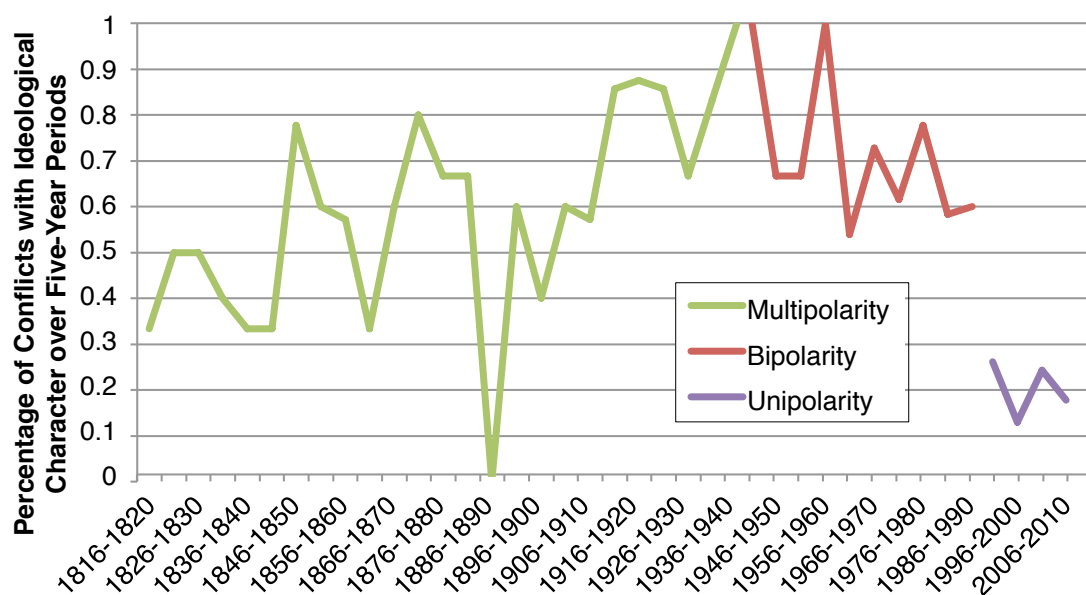
difference is not of practical significance (and adding in extra-state wars to the comparison does not change this). One might expect ideological civil wars to be more prone to escalation or difficulty in negotiating a termination, causing them to drag out until one side is militarily victorious.

Duration in Years	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
Ideological	0.786	2.121	2.049
Non-Ideological	1.011	1.216	1.164
Unipolarity features too few observations to generalize about.			
<div>duration by (polarity, ideology) <i>(multipolarity, ideological)</i>  0.786 <i>Other</i> 1.523   0   2   4   6   8   10   12   14   16   18   20  </div>		<div>duration by (polarity, ideology) <i>(bipolarity, ideological)</i>  2.121 <i>Other</i> 0.984   0   2   4   6   8   10   12   14   16   18   20  </div>	
Median duration per conflict			

The reason for this confusion over the effect of ideology on internal war lies in ideology's interaction with polarity: ideology has a different effect on duration in different periods. The historical data demonstrates that ideological internal wars during multipolarity were significantly shorter than non-ideological civil wars, whereas during bipolarity ideological internal wars were much longer.

This result confirms the theoretical expectations, but more importantly makes sense when considering the international politics of the two periods. The Concert of Europe, as an anti-revolutionary club of dynastic monarchs, had a constitutive interest in putting down revolution and upheaval after witnessing Napoleon's republican armies overrun Europe and overthrow legitimate monarchs. Ideological affiliation was not a strong indicator of alignment with any particular great power, especially because there were multiple liberal powers and multiple conservative powers in competition over their respective spheres of interest. During the Cold War the two superpowers treated ideological affiliation as a much stronger signal of alignment in their competition over the Third World, making war-lengthening external support, intervention, and counterintervention standard practices.

## Ratio of Ideological to Non-Ideological Intra-State Wars



Charting the ratio of ideological to non-ideological civil wars over the past two hundred years shows the major presence of transnational political ideology in internal conflicts.

Liberalism and Marxism in their various strains are found on at least one side of almost every ideological conflict from 1816 through to the end of the Cold War. During both the multipolar and the bipolar eras, the median internal war has an ideological component—whether it is the principal motivating factor, or merely a claim, perhaps cynically made, by the leadership of one or more internal factions attempting to gain outside support or internal legitimacy. However, during the unipolar era, the number of ideologically-colored internal conflicts drops precipitously when compared to the previous two eras. The post-Cold War internal wars that do have an ideological element are generally fought by Marxist or quasi-Marxist factions held over from the Cold War. The trend from 1991–present has been a steep decline in ideological internal war.

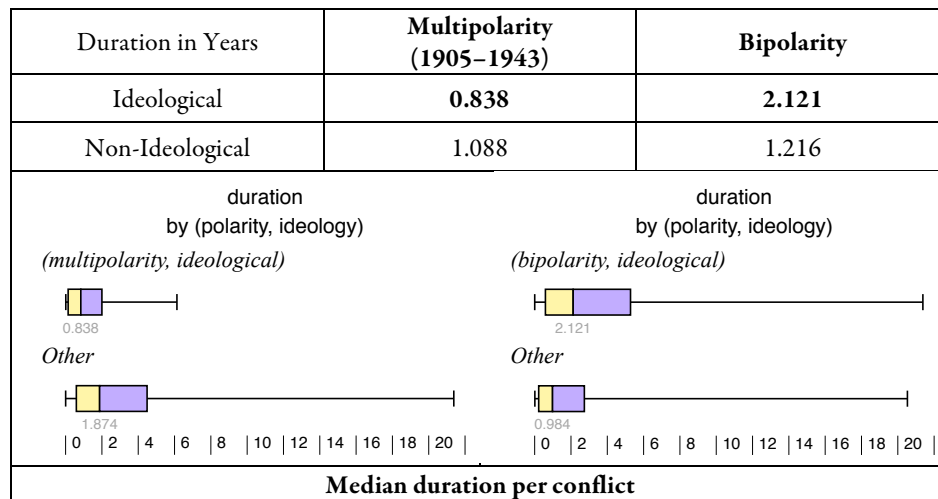
While the Cold War was defined by contests over the ideological outcome of civil wars, what is surprising is the degree to which ideological concerns played a significant role during the multipolar period as well. While thought of as the age of particularistic nationalisms in which ethno-linguistic identities took center stage,<sup>22</sup> the role of liberal ideas—republicanism, constitutionalism, parliamentarism, Orléanism, federalism, or other -isms related to the broad family of 1800s liberal thought—can be seen throughout the major conflicts in Europe and Latin America and elsewhere. Conversely, anti-liberal ideologies—monarchism, conservatism, Carlism, royalism, dynastic legitimism—also spawned internal wars when the predominant regime was liberal. Toward the end of the multipolar period, an increasingly diverse set of ideologies began to play a role, including anarchism, socialism, communism, and fascism.

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<sup>22</sup> On European pan-nationalisms developing during this time period, see Arendt (1968).



The dramatic shift in the ideologies involved in upheaval during the last forty years of multipolarity raises an important question. Is the effect of ideology on civil war duration a product of different ideologies and not the structuring effect of polarity? It could be that liberal revolutions are different in their character than the anarchist, fascist, and communist conflicts that followed. The above chart of ideological internal wars shows that the conflicts of the early 1900s were just as likely to be ideological as those of the Cold War. In order to test whether the effect that changing polarity is seemingly having on duration is actually due to changing ideologies – from liberalism to (predominantly) Marxism – we can compare just the 1905–1943 multipolar period to the bipolar 1944–1990 period. Both periods are intensely ideological and the ideological internal wars are dominated by conflict centered on Marxism.



When the subperiod of multipolarity is tested against bipolarity, we see that the intensity of ideologization and the shift from liberalism to Marxism is not driving the observed effect of ideology on duration. Ideological conflicts in this subperiod of multipolarity are still substantially shorter than non-ideological conflicts, and ideological conflicts in bipolarity remain far longer than non-ideological conflicts. And, adding extra-state wars to the comparison reinforces the observed effect and its significance. The structuring effect of the

international balance of power appears to determine the way that transnational political ideologies affect duration.

The final important shift that we see when charting the ratio of ideological to non-ideological conflicts is the comparatively very low rate of ideologization during unipolarity. Outside of a few holdovers from the Cold War, Marxism virtually disappeared as an inspiration to revolt, a way to frame grievances, or an affiliation that made sense to opportunistically claim in search of external support. Where multipolarity saw about 60% of its internal wars feature an ideological element, and bipolarity saw over 70%, during unipolarity just under 20% of internal wars feature transnational political ideology. A dominant theme running throughout internal war scholarship is the question of ‘ethnic war,’ its supposed rise, and the ways in which it is or is not differentiable from other internal wars (e.g. those involving socio-political revolution, those motivated by greed, coups or other power-seeking conflicts, or non-ethnic politicized).<sup>23</sup> But put into context, the vast scholarship and popular analysis of the post-Cold War explosion in ethnic conflict gets things backwards.<sup>24</sup> Conflicts in which the battle lines were drawn along ethnicity have always been a major part of intra-state war (not to speak of the even clearer case of extra-state war). The change that occurred was not an eruption of ethnic conflict, but a collapse of ideological conflict. Ethnic conflicts during the multipolar and bipolar periods existed, but were perceived as political, ideological, or revolutionary. Great powers imposed an ideological interpretation on conflicts that very often did not begin for

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<sup>23</sup> For a skeptical look at the concept of ‘ethnic war’ as it is used in political science scholarship, see Gilley (2004). On the vague distinction between ‘ethnic’ and ‘revolutionary’ wars, see Sambanis (2002). And, on the ‘new and old wars’ literature, see: Kalyvas (2001) and Melander *et. al.* (2009).

<sup>24</sup> See for example: Midlarsky (1992), Brown (1993), Posen (1993), Gurr (1993), Gurr & Harff (1994), Ryan (1995), Fearon & Laitin (2003), Kalyvas (2008), Kauffman (1996), Kauffman (1999), Sambanis (2000), Sambanis (2001), among many others.

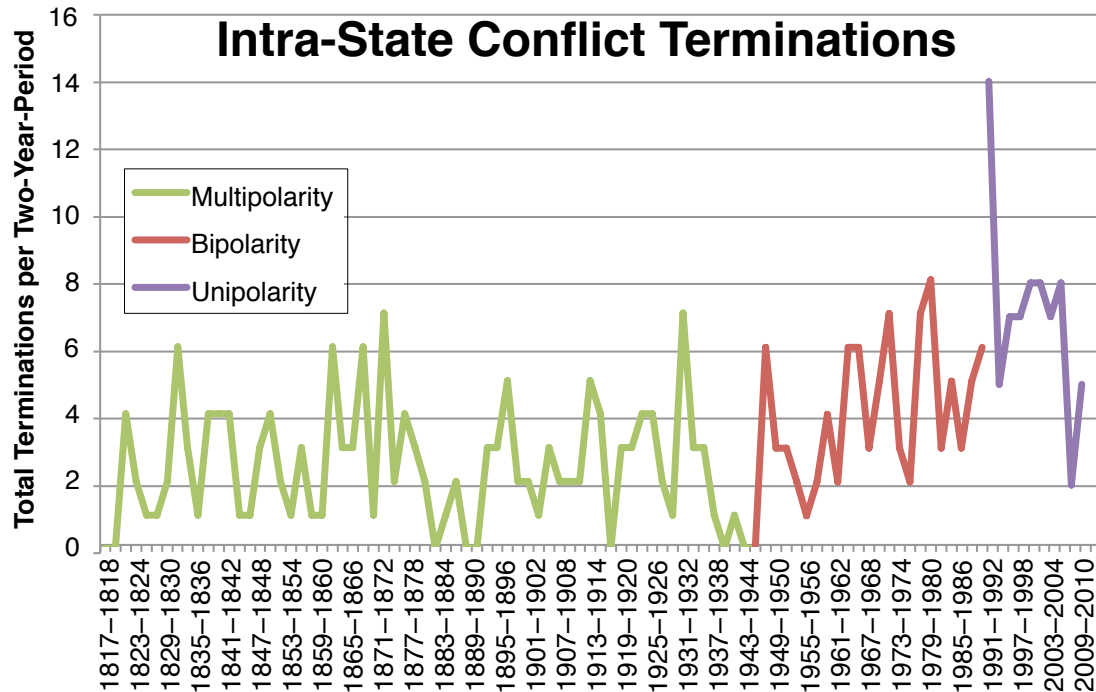
ideological reasons, while internal factions frequently claimed an ideological affiliation opportunistically as a means of garnering external support from the great power sponsor of whichever ideology.<sup>25</sup>

Examining duration allows us to gain significant insight into the initial puzzle of why the incidence of internal war seems to correspond so closely to major turning points in international history. Even more than onset, duration helps explain the tremendous buildup of the incidence of internal war over the course of the bipolar period. Ideology on its own seems to have no general effect on duration, rather it is the interaction between ideology and polarity that produces divergent changes to the duration of internal wars. Ideological wars during multipolarity are significantly shorter, while ideological wars during bipolarity are significantly longer. This effect was shown to be caused by the shift in polarity, not the shift in the predominant revolutionary ideology. Finally, the post-Cold War explosion in ethnic conflict was recontextualized not as the emergence of a new type of internal war but as the character of internal war once ideology is no longer imposed from outside or opportunistically claimed from the inside. But to complete our understanding of the incidence of internal war as it is structured by international politics – especially the rapid decline in incidence during unipolarity – we need next to turn to internal war terminations.

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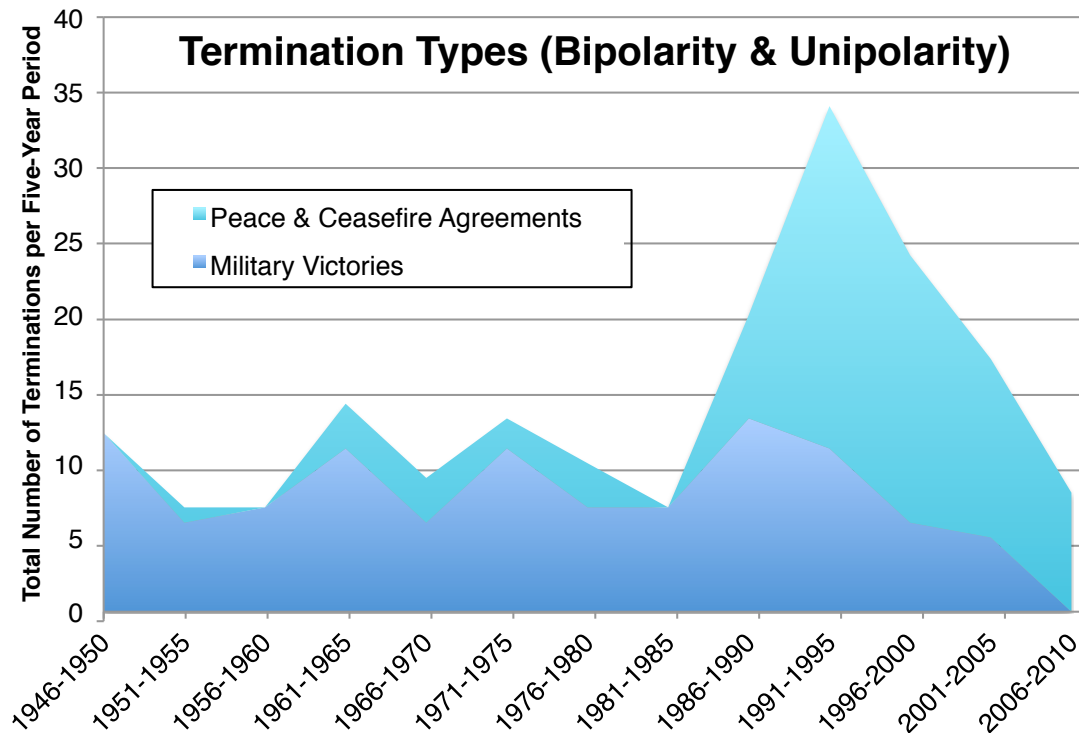
<sup>25</sup> Acharya (1998), p. 174.

## Termination



Internal war terminations are fairly evenly distributed over time, except for a major spike in resolutions accompanying the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the incidence of internal war was able to drop quickly as Cold War conflicts were now resolvable with the advent of the 'new world order' declared by Mikhail Gorbachev and George H.W. Bush. While the correlates of conflicts ended in the unipolar era may be different from those resolved in the bipolar era, this leads to the question of whether the correlates changed because of circumstances and learning, or simply because new approaches to conflict resolution were now available or possible once the structure of international politics changed. Significantly, it does not seem that just any calming of tensions between the great powers produces a significant spike in conflict terminations (e.g. the 1884 Berlin Conference, the 1919 Peace of Versailles, the 1955 "spirit of Geneva," 1969–1979 détente). A major spike

only occurred when a calming of tensions was accompanied by a structural change to the international distribution of power: the end of bipolarity.



Using the more detailed UCDP Conflict Termination dataset to examine the type of terminations, we can see another very marked shift from bipolarity to unipolarity. The UCDP data shows the same post-Cold War spike in settlements that we observe in the Gleditsch data, but here we can differentiate between different means of conflict termination. The shift is striking: almost a total reversal of the proportions between military victories and negotiated agreements. While military victories made up about 80% of conflict terminations during bipolarity, negotiated agreements make up nearly 75% of intra-state conflict terminations during unipolarity. Unfortunately, aggregate data cannot reveal to what extent negotiation was *more effective* during unipolarity rather than simply *more employed* or *more possible* as a tool of

diplomacy during unipolarity.<sup>26</sup> Was this a process of learning, was this the opening up of new possibilities due to a structural change in international politics, or is this correlation simply a response to contingent circumstances that happened to lend themselves to negotiation rather than military victory? Given the abruptness and magnitude of the shift, the data presented here seems to point toward the changing distribution of power opening up new conditions of possibility, rather than the results of learning over time or contingency.

Existing scholarship on internal war termination and settlement does go beyond solely internal factors and apolitical correlates – unlike so much of the onset and duration studies – and includes a substantial amount of inquiry into the role of external intervention and mediation.<sup>27</sup> Despite inclusion of external or international factors, most studies of termination nevertheless do not make rigorous systemic arguments regarding the structural conditions of possibility for negotiated peaces and ceasefires.<sup>28</sup> The Gleditsch and UCDP data charted here lends provisional support to the theoretical expectations that the structure of the system should have a significant effect on internal war outcomes. First, the shift away from an inherently conflictual bipolar structure allowed the accumulating incidence of internal wars to be quickly resolved. Second, the unipolar structure, which does not feature an inherent great power conflict, changes the conditions of possibility for the resolution of wars in the periphery, increasing both the feasibility and effectiveness of negotiated agreements. Whereas during bipolarity third party guarantees were difficult to ensure given the structural proclivity toward subversion and counterintervention, during unipolarity third party guarantees and

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<sup>26</sup> On settlements and recidivism, see Walter (2002), Pearson *et al.* (2006), Gurses, Rost & McLeod (2008).

<sup>27</sup> For example, see Walter (1999), Walter (2002), de Rouen & Sobek (2004), Hartzell (1999), and Mason, Weingarten & Fett (1999).

<sup>28</sup> Important exceptions are Wallensteen & Sollenberg (1997) and Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000).

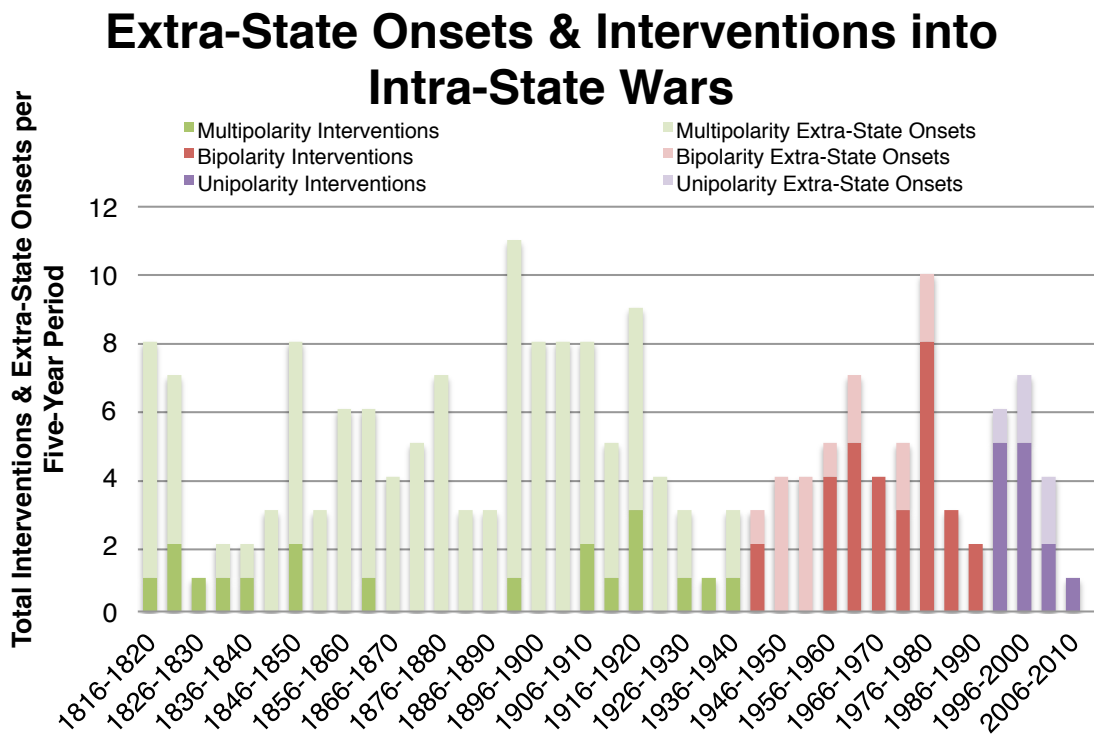
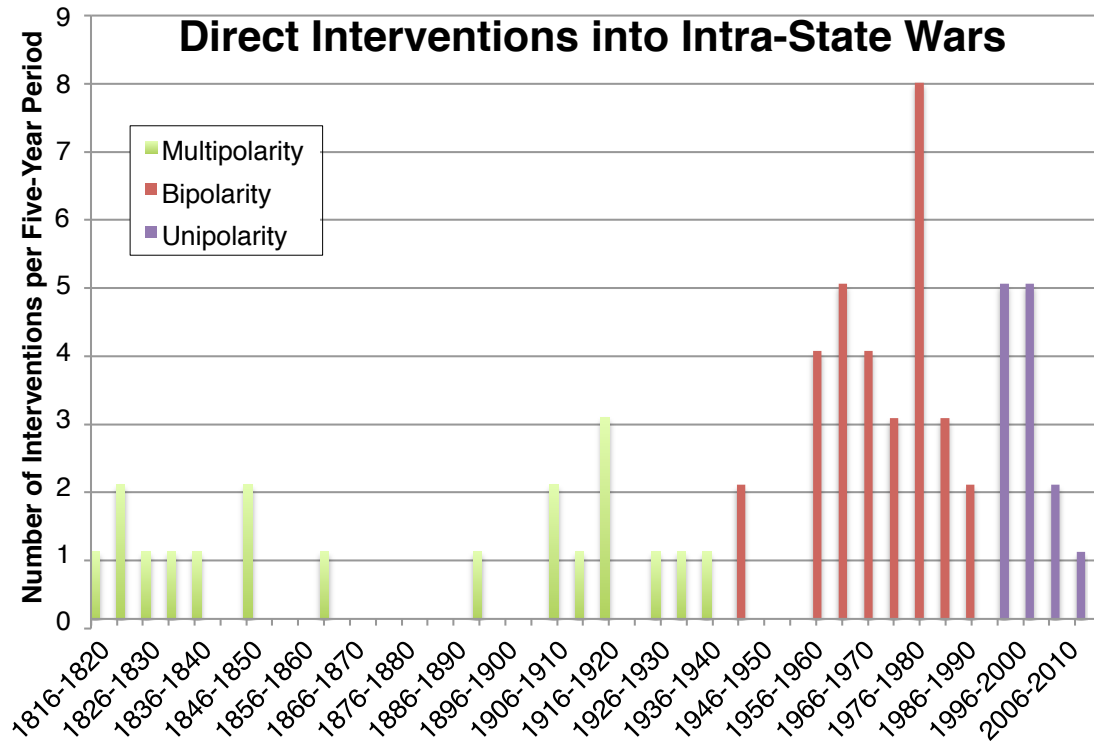
international peacekeeping can more plausibly maintain both neutrality and effectiveness in the absence of subversion.

Noting the role of intervention in affecting the feasibility of negotiated termination leads us to the final piece necessary to complete our understanding of the structural effects upon the character of internal war: the effect of structure on intervention.

## **Intervention & Battle Deaths**

Intervention serves as the most overt link between internal war and international politics. As we might expect, the rate of external intervention into internal wars appears to be structured by polarity. However, this may be another artifact of “accounting,” if one considers extra-state wars the practical equivalent of intervention. Intervention is important to understand because, like ideology, intervention has an important relationship with duration and its effect is structured by polarity. Further, ideological wars during bipolarity attracted far more intervention than ideological or non-ideological wars during other periods.

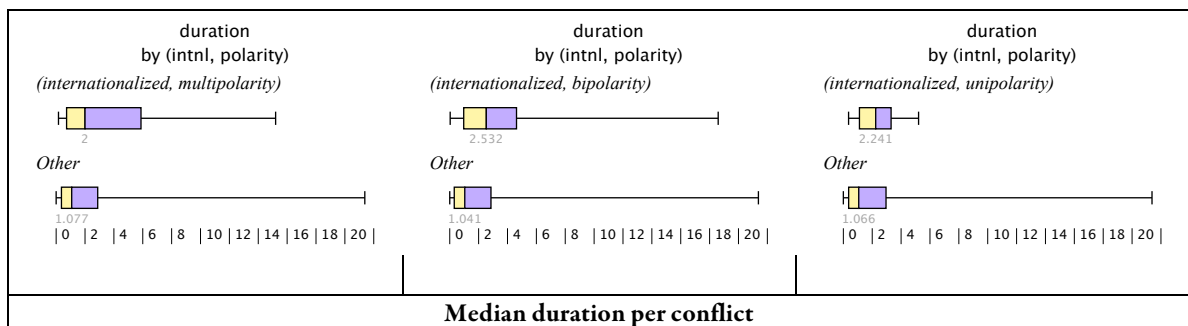
Charting the Gleditsch data on interventions, it is clear that both bipolarity and unipolarity feature a much greater number of interventions per year. About 29% of conflicts during bipolarity featured one or more external powers intervening, while about 23% of conflicts during unipolarity did, and multipolarity saw intervention at a rate of about 12%. Initially it appears that polarity played a role in constraining intervention during multipolarity.





However, we must recall that a great deal of great power military activity in the peripheries during the multipolar era is being hidden in the “extra-state” war category. If we treat extra-state wars as the practical equivalent of direct interventions into civil wars,<sup>29</sup> we can nevertheless see that great powers during multipolarity were no less active in the periphery than superpowers in bipolarity or unipolarity. Multipolarity featured an average of one intervention or extra-state war onset per year, in bipolarity the average rate was the same, and in unipolarity the rate dipped to 0.9—not a significant difference across periods.

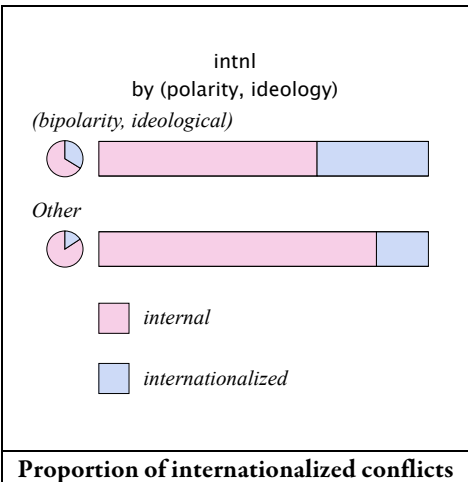
Internationalization of a civil war has an important relationship with duration in general—conflicts that attract a direct military intervention are more than twice as long as those that do not. But intervention’s interaction with polarity reveals what is driving the more general effect of intervention on duration: intervention during bipolarity magnifies duration, whereas intervention’s effect during multipolarity or unipolarity is no longer significant.



Recall the structuring effect that bipolarity had upon ideology as it increased internal war duration; and, as we just demonstrated, the effect of intervention on duration is magnified during bipolarity. In addition to these effects, the Gleditsch data indicates that ideological

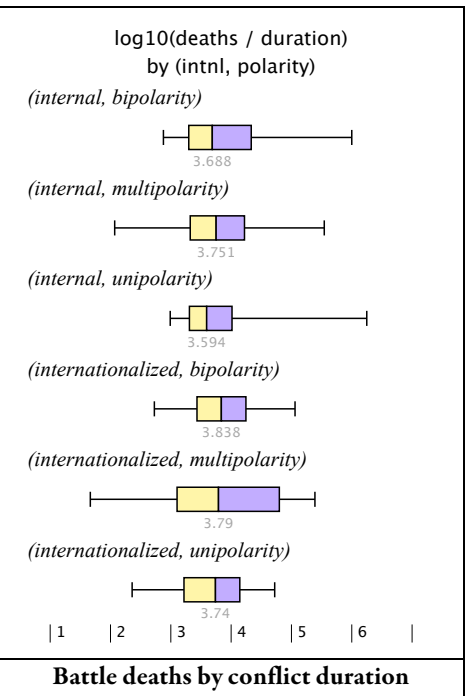
<sup>29</sup> Conflating direct interventions into intra-state wars with extra-state war onsets comes with several problems, because although they are both conflicts over sovereignty, they are different phenomena in kind and in practical considerations. Despite the similarity between a secessionist civil war and a colonial war of national liberation, an intervening state is a third-party to a civil war whereas the metropole in an extra-state war is one of the principal parties to the conflict.

conflicts during bipolarity attracted significantly more intervention than ideological conflicts in multipolarity and unipolarity as well as non-ideological conflicts across all periods. Together these results reinforce the theory's expectations that bipolarity is anomalous in terms of its intensity: it features the highest rate of onset and intervention, most intense ideologization, longest duration and highest battle deaths.



One might expect that when external states intervene, that a civil war's battle deaths might rise dramatically, or conversely that external powers might intervene in conflicts that are already especially bloody in order to bring them to an end. But, battle deaths only show a superficial relationship to intervention and polarity—in actuality variation in battle deaths is almost entirely driven by duration, and this holds true across all periods. Insofar as intervention, ideology, and polarity interact to increase or decrease internal war duration, they will also have an effect on battle deaths, but they have no independent effects of their own. Bipolarity has the highest battle deaths per conflict only because it has the longest wars.

Existing scholarship on intervention also notes its relationship to duration and termination, with authors arguing that: intervention on the side of rebels



shortens internal wars; intervention on the side of the state lengthens conflicts; that intervention in general increases the overall risk of a stalemated outcome and a longer war; and, that interventions specifically by the United Nations decrease the chance of either side emerging victorious while increasing the chance of a truce.<sup>30</sup> With the exception of the effect of the UN, the conclusions being drawn about intervention are heavily biased by overrepresentation of Cold War data and the exclusion of pre-WWII data.

But it is clear from this analysis that intervention into internal wars must be studied in a systemic context—the propensity to intervene in a given historical period is just as likely to be influenced by the balance of power as it is to be influenced by the particular interests and circumstances of each conflict. As Hironaka notes, shifts in the balance of power also produce shifts in the predominant mode of intervention: in multipolarity external powers tended to intervene multilaterally on the state's side of an internal war, whereas in bipolarity they would instead engage in counterintervention against each other's partisans.<sup>31</sup> The changing mode of intervention makes sense, given the stability preference we expect the multipolar powers to exhibit toward the peripheries as well as the propensity of the bipolar powers to export instability to the Third World through proxy conflicts. As a result, different periods of the balance of power produce interventions that have opposite effects on internal war duration. Additionally, the data on intervention supports the theory's expectations that while bipolarity should feature the highest level of intervention, multipolarity should feature a lower rate of intervention, because the stakes at play in an intervention are conditioned by the structure of the international system.

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<sup>30</sup> See Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom (2004), Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000), Regan (2000), Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), and de Rouen & Sobek (2004).

<sup>31</sup> Hironaka (2005), pp. 26, 56.

## Conclusions

The data on internal wars over the past two hundred years lends strong support to the two major claims made by my theory: that there is a significant international political element in shaping the character of internal war; and, that the distribution of power in the international system structures the interests of internal factions and external powers, structures the effects of transnational political ideology, and structures the political importance of new state creation. The broad patterns of internal war cannot be explained without understanding how the balance of power affects the character of civil wars by shaping interests, ideology, and new states.

Multipolarity does in fact experience the lowest rate of onsets, intervention, duration, and battle deaths. Conversely, bipolarity features the highest rate of onsets, intervention, ideological conflict, duration, and battle deaths. Unipolarity lies in between for most variables, but has dramatically fewer ideological conflicts while seeing a dramatic rise in negotiated peace or ceasefire agreements in the place of military victory.

Onsets of internal war are highest in bipolarity and lowest in multipolarity, but as was discovered most of this discrepancy can be explained by the “accounting” error introduced by formal imperialism and the subsequent waves of decolonization and state creation. Against conventional wisdom, the data shows that new states are less prone to descend into internal war over the first fifteen years of their independence. But that is qualified by the finding that new states during bipolarity were more prone to internal war than states in other periods.

Examination of internal war duration revealed that polarity has a substantial effect on the duration of conflicts. Bipolarity experienced the largest proportion of long civil wars, whereas multipolarity overwhelmingly featured short civil wars. Interestingly, ideology’s influence on internal war duration has an important interaction effect with polarity. Ideology

on its own has no general effect on duration, but ideological conflicts during multipolarity were much shorter than other conflicts, while ideological conflicts during bipolarity were far longer, magnifying the effect already observed of polarity alone on duration. Testing the ideologically charged early 1900s subperiod of multipolarity against bipolarity allowed us to rule out the rise of Marxism (in place of liberalism as the predominant revolutionary ideology) as the cause of changing internal war duration—it was the changing polarity not the changing ideology that altered internal war duration. Finally, the seeming “explosion” of ethnic wars following the end of the Cold War was revealed to be a perception created by the de-ideologization of internal war after the collapse of the USSR.

Terminations show few patterns except for a major spike in the first years of unipolarity. This was caused by the rapid resolution of a large swath of Cold War conflicts that could no longer be sustained. Because a unipolar distribution of power lacks the inherent structure of great power conflict that accompanies bipolarity, new conditions of possibility for conflict resolution became feasible, and international institutions and mediation efforts became more effective. The data showed that the proportion of internal wars ending in military victory as opposed to negotiated agreement flipped from bipolarity to unipolarity.

Interventions were shown to have a major effect in increasing internal war duration during bipolarity, but not during other periods. Further, ideological wars during bipolarity showed a higher rate of intervention than other internal wars. The effects of intervention, ideology, and polarity all appear to reinforce the higher duration and the higher battle deaths seen in bipolarity.

Using changes to the structure of the international system to guide the analysis of the past two hundred years worth of data on internal war has gone a long way toward helping to answer the puzzle that this chapter began with: why does the incidence of internal war appear to follow the major turning points of international politics? If internal war were a wholly internal phenomenon, its character determined by domestic material factors and domestic politics, then the pattern of incidence would have to be an improbable and spurious coincidence. But the historical record seems to point toward a substantial role for international politics in shaping the character of internal war. The distribution of power appears to structure both the interests and behavior of external powers weighing intervention and of internal factions assessing the possibilities of garnering external support.

The patterns and correlations that emerged from the internal war data once it was categorized according to the balance of power is not definitive proof that the causal processes specified by the theory are actually generating the resulting aggregate patterns. But the data presented here does have significant advantages over the mainstream internal war scholarship focused on finding apolitical correlates and over-representing data from the anomalous period of bipolarity. The most important take-away may be that lessons learned about past civil wars are not necessarily applicable to present civil wars—conflating the nature of past and present civil wars stripped of their context within world politics can be fundamentally misleading. In order to more conclusively demonstrate the causal processes generating the periodization of internal wars, I will proceed over the next three chapters to examine a case from each period: the 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war, the 1959–1975 Laotian civil war, and the 1998–1999 Kosovo War.

## Statistical Appendix

Below are the nonparametric statistical tests used as aids in analyzing the internal war data in Chapter 3. As before, the data being analyzed is not suited for parametric tests: civil wars grouped by polarity are not randomly selected, highly right skewed, and not normally distributed even when transformed. It could be argued that some observations are not independent. As discussed in the Introduction's literature review, there are a substantial number of studies that look at the causal relationship of spillover/refugees, contagion/demonstration, bad neighbors, and recidivism with internal war onsets. But I do not think these hypothesized effects, to the extent that they are even present, bias the observations in such a way that cross-period comparison would be rendered invalid. There are no indications from those studies that regional effects on onsets would vary from period to period. And when system membership is controlled for, this dissertation finds that there are no significant differences in the rate of onset per year across periods.

The stronger challenge to the independence of observations comes from the way that the Correlates of War and Gleditsch datasets both code internal wars that drop below the 1,000 battle-death threshold for a time, only to re-enter the dataset as a new onset when higher

casualties return. One can observe in both COW and Gleditsch's dataset (see below) several conflicts marked "Phase 1," "Phase 2," and "Phase 3." Qualitative assessments might treat these phases as part of one coherent and unbroken conflict. But the datasets will code different 'phases' when a war drops below the 1,000 battle-death threshold or if the war switches from internal to internationalized<sup>1</sup> (e.g. Vietnam begins as an intra-state war, but later becomes an inter-state and disappears from this dataset)—although Gleditsch does combine several conflicts that shifted from non-state wars into intra-state wars into one observation instead of two. The three wars that appear in two different phases in both the COW & Gleditsch datasets are:

- The 1839 & 1840 "Second Syrian War";
- The 1930–1936 & 1946–1950 "Chinese Civil War"; and,
- The 1976–1977 & 1978–1980 "Second Ogaden."

The Chinese Civil War was placed into abeyance for ten years by the Japanese invasion and World War II, so the decision to separate it into two observations is easily justifiable. The first phase of the Second Syrian War involved an Ottoman attempt to put down Mehmet II's extension of Egyptian control over Syria and declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Egypt won the first round, despite mediation by the Europeans. A year intervened without battle deaths, until the European powers led by Britain (and periodically involving the Ottomans) invaded to defeat both Egypt's control of Syria and its bid for independence. The Second Ogaden war involved a secession attempt by the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. When Ogaden's rebellion stalled, neighboring Somalia invaded to support them, which COW and

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<sup>1</sup> For an explanation of the COW intra-state war coding standards, see Sarkees & Wayman (2010), pp. 338–240.



Gleditsch code as transforming the conflict into an inter-state war. The third phase of the civil war began once Somalia withdrew and Ethiopia returned to fighting Ogaden directly.

The multiple phases of these three conflicts are thus the result of the 1,000 battle death per year criterion or the mutually-exclusive categorization scheme employed by COW that Gleditsch inherits. One can accept that the observations in the Gleditsch dataset are independent to the extent that the reader finds justifiable the criteria employed by COW & Gleditsch to determine what constitutes an ongoing internal war. I believe that splitting the Chinese Civil War was clearly valid, but splitting the Syrian and Ogaden cases was a more questionable move, based on coding technicalities more than on historically or politically significant breaks in the civil wars.

Readers should take the test results with a grain of salt, and view them as an additional level of applied skepticism toward my claims, rather than as proof of a causal relationship.

## Detailed Test Reports

Research hypothesis	Test	Test groups	Medians & Observations	Test statistic	Critical value @ $\alpha$ 0.05	Result	p-value
<b>Tests of Onset</b>							
The median onset during multipolarity is systematically lower than the rate of onset during bipolarity and unipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Onsets/year	Multipolarity: 1 [128] Bi+Unipolarity: 2 [68]	$z = 4.726$	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
The median onset/year of intra+extra-state wars varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Intra+Extra State Onsets/year	Multipolarity: 2 [128] Bipolarity: 2 [47] Unipolarity: 3 [21]	$\chi^2(2) = 4.909$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.086$
The median onset/membership varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Onsets/year /system membership	Multipolarity: 0.018 [128] Bipolarity: 0.015 [47] Unipolarity: 0.012 [21]	$\chi^2(2) = 1.246$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.536$
<b>Tests of Duration</b>							
The median duration during bipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration during multipolarity and unipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Bipolarity: 2.074 [107] Multi+Unipolarity: 0.942 [211]	$z = 3.942$	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
The median duration during multipolarity is systematically lower than the median duration during bipolarity and unipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Multipolarity: 0.896 [155] Bi+Unipolarity: 1.786 [163]	$z = 4.108$	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
<b>Tests of Ideology &amp; Duration</b>							
The rate of ideologization of conflicts during bipolarity is systematically higher than in multipolarity or unipolarity	Fisher's z Transformation Test	Ideological /conflict	Bipolarity+Ideological: 72.9% [78] All other: 50% [237]	$z = 3.318$	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
The rate of ideologization of conflicts during unipolarity is systematically lower than in multipolarity or bipolarity	Fisher's z Transformation Test	Ideological /conflict	Unipolarity+Ideological: 20.8% [11] All other: 65.3% [304]	$z = 6.197$	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
The median duration of ideological internal wars is systematically higher than the median duration of non-ideological internal wars	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Ideological: 1.184 [178] Non-Ideological: 1.115 [140]	$z = 0.342$	1.96	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.733$
The median duration of ideological internal wars during multipolarity is systematically lower than the median duration of internal wars during bipolarity and unipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Multipolarity+Ideological: 0.786 [93] All other: 1.523 [225]	$z = 3.812$	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$
The median duration of ideological internal wars during bipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration of internal wars during multipolarity and unipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Bipolarity+Ideological: 2.121 [74] All other: 0.984 [244]	$z = 3.282$	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$

The median duration of ideological internal wars during the 1905–1943 subperiod of multipolarity is systematically lower than the median duration of internal wars during bipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Multipolarity (1905–1943)+Ideological: 0.838 [36] All other: 1.874 [117]	z = 3.245	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	p = 0.001
The median duration of ideological internal wars during bipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration of internal wars during bipolarity and the 1905–1943 subperiod of multipolarity	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Bipolarity+Ideological: 2.121 [74] All other: 0.984 [79]	z = 2.824	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	p = 0.005
<b>Tests of Intervention</b>							
There is a negative relationship between multipolarity and the rate of intervention per conflict	Fisher's z Transformation Test	Intervention /conflict	Multipolarity+Intervention: 12.3% [155] All other: 27% [163]	z = 3.318	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	p < 0.001
	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Intra-Intervention +Extra-Onset /year	Multipolarity: 1 [128] Bipolarity: 1 [47] Unipolarity: 0 [25]	$\chi^2(2) = 2.16$	5.991	The difference is not significant	p = 0.34
The median duration of internationalized internal wars during multipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration of all other internal wars	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Multipolarity+Internationalized: 2 [19] All other: 1.077 [299]	z = 1.637	1.96	The difference is not significant	p = 0.106
The median duration of internationalized internal wars during bipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration of all other internal wars	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Bipolarity+Internationalized: 2.532 [31] All other: 1.041 [287]	z = 2.89	1.96	The difference is <b>significant</b>	p = 0.004
The median duration of internationalized internal wars during unipolarity is systematically higher than the median duration of all other internal wars	Mann-Whitney U-test	Duration/conflict	Unipolarity+Internationalized: 2.241 [13] All other: 1.066 [305]	z = 1.704	1.96	The difference is not significant	p = 0.088
There is a positive relationship between ideological wars during bipolarity and intervention	Fisher's z Transformation Test	Intervention /conflict	Bipolarity+Ideological: 33.8% [74] All other: 15.6% [244]	z = 3.47	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	p < 0.001
	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Battle deaths/duration /conflict	Multipolarity+Internal: 5641 [136] Multipolarity+Intervention: 6173 [19] Bipolarity+Internal: 4871 [76] Bipolarity+Intervention: 6883 [31] Unipolarity+Internal: 3929 [40] Unipolarity+Intervention: 5467 [13]	$\chi^2(5) = 1.903$	11.07	The difference is not significant	p = 0.862
<b>Tests of Termination Type</b>							
Military victory as a termination type is systematically lower during unipolarity	Fisher's z Transformation Test	Termination type /conflict	Unipolarity: 30.2% [53] Multi+Bipolarity: 58.4% [262]	z = 3.795	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	p < 0.001

### Tests of New State Weakness

The ratio of new state onsets to established state onsets is systematically lower during multipolarity	Fisher Transformation Test	New state /conflict	Multipolarity: 7.1% [155] Bi+Unipolarity: 19.4% [160]	$z = 3.225$	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	$p = 0.001$
The ratio of new state onsets to established state onsets is systematically higher during bipolarity	Fisher Transformation Test	New state /conflict	Bipolarity: 23.4% [107] Multi+Unipolarity: 8.2% [208]	$z = 3.796$	1.96	The correlation is <b>significant</b>	$p < 0.001$

## Randomized Test Reports

Because the grouping of the Gleditsch data by polarity does not constitute a random sample, I have performed a second set of tests using three randomized groupings. A random number generator was used to place each conflict in one of three groups – Control\_One, Control\_Two, and Control\_Three – in order to test if differences found across multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity could simply be due to the contingent assortment of outliers. With one exception, the findings reported across polarities were not reproduced or contradicted when performing the same tests across the three control groups. Testing the effect of intervention on duration across the three test groups *did* return a significant result. Although nearly all the randomized tests failed to cast doubt on the main findings, the one false positive produced here is again a reminder to take the inferential statistical results with a grain of salt, especially because we are dealing with highly skewed data divided into small sample sizes.

Research hypothesis	Test	Test groups	Medians & Observations	Test statistic	Critical value @ $\alpha 0.05$	Result	p-value
Polarity and Control are not independent	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	Polarity sub-groups & Control sub-groups		$\chi^2(4) = 3.401$	9.488	There is no correlation	$p = 0.493$
<b>Tests of Onset</b>							
The median onset/year varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Onsets/year	Control_One: 1 [61] Control_Two: 1 [70] Control_Three: 1 [65]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.478$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.787$
The median onset/year of intra+extra-state wars varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Intra+Extra State Onsets/year	Control_One: 2 [61] Control_Two: 2 [70] Control_Three: 2 [65]	$\chi^2(2) = 1.72$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.423$
The median onset/membership varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Onsets/year /system membership	Control_One: 0.019 [61] Control_Two: 0.017 [70] Control_Three: 0.018 [65]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.197$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.906$
<b>Tests of Duration</b>							
The median duration varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis H-test	Duration/conflict	Control_One: 1.115 [125] Control_Two: 1.578 [92] Control_Three: 0.925 [98]	$\chi^2(2) = 1.448$	5.991	The difference is not significant	$p = 0.485$

Tests of Ideology & Duration					
The median rate of ideologization per conflict varies across periods	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	Ideological /conflict	Control_One: 56.8% [125] Control_Two: 59.8% [92] Control_Three: 57.1% [98]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.217$	There is no correlation  p = 0.897
	The median duration of ideological vs. non-ideological internal wars varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis <i>H</i> -test	Duration/conflict	Control_One+ideological: 1.216 [71] Control_One+nonideological: 1.026 [54] Control_Two+ideological: 1.964 [55] Control_Two+nonideological: 1.173 [37] Control_Three+ideological: 0.824 [56] Control_Three+nonideological: 1.152 [42]	$\chi^2(5) = 2.748$
Tests of Intervention					
The rate of intervention per conflict varies across periods	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	Intervention /conflict	Control_One: 21.6% [125] Control_Two: 17.4% [92] Control_Three: 20.4% [98]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.602$	There is no correlation  p = 0.740
Conflict duration is systematically affected by intervention/non-intervention across periods	Kruskal-Wallis <i>H</i> -test	Duration/conflict	Control_One+Internal: 1.04 [98] Control_One+Intervention: 1.748 [27] Control_Two+Internal: 1.12 [78] Control_Two+Intervention: 3.322 [16] Control_Three+Internal: 0.702 [40] Control_Three+Intervention: 2.038 [20]	$\chi^2(5) = 18.159$	The difference is <b>significant</b>  p = 0.003
	The median number per year of extra-state onsets + intra-state interventions varies across periods	Kruskal-Wallis <i>H</i> -test	Intra-Intervention +Extra-Onset /year	Control_One: 1 [61] Control_Two: 1 [70] Control_Three: 1 [65]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.412$
There is a systematic relationship between ideological wars and intervention across periods	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	Intervention /conflict	Control_One+ideological: 22.5% [71] Control_One+nonideological: 20.4% [54] Control_Two+ideological: 20% [55] Control_Two+nonideological: 13.5% [37] Control_Three+ideological: 21.4% [56] Control_Three+nonideological: 19% [42]	$\chi^2(5) = 1.358$	There is no correlation  p = 0.929
	Intervention has a systematic effect on battle deaths (controlled for duration) across periods	Kruskal-Wallis <i>H</i> -test	Battle deaths/duration /conflict	Control_One+Internal: 5641 [98] Control_One+Intervention: 6173 [27] Control_Two+Internal: 4871 [78] Control_Two+Intervention: 6883 [16] Control_Three+Internal: 3929 [40] Control_Three+Intervention: 5467 [20]	$\chi^2(5) = 1.903$
Tests of Termination Type					
The type of termination varies across periods	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	Termination type /conflict	Control_One: 52.8% [125] Control_Two: 52.2% [92] Control_Three: 56.1% [98]	$\chi^2(12) = 12.51$	There is no correlation  p = 0.406
Tests of New State Weakness					
The ratio of new state onsets to established state onsets varies across periods	Pearson's Chi-Square test for Independence	New state /conflict	Control_One: 14.4% [125] Control_Two: 10.9% [92] Control_Three: 14.3% [98]	$\chi^2(2) = 0.683$	There is no correlation  p = 0.711

## Additions to Gleditsch Dataset

I extended Kristian Gleditsch's "Expanded War Data" Version 2.0,<sup>1</sup> by introducing three new variables – *polarity*, *ideology*, and *new state* – and coded each war according to the criteria laid out in the introduction and quantitative portions of this study (Chapters 1 & 3). For *polarity* every conflict was coded according to the year of its onset: 'multipolarity' from 1816–1943; 'bipolarity' from 1944–1990; and, 'unipolarity' from 1991–2010. Each conflict in the dataset was coded as *ideological* if it met any of three criteria: one of the factions or parties to the internal conflict explicitly defined its identity in ideological terms; one of the leaders explicitly expressed an ideological affiliation or goal either in starting the conflict or during the conflict; or, one of the central issues of the conflict was tied inherently to an ideological affiliation. If a given war's onset occurred within fifteen years of the state's birth, I coded it as a *new state* conflict. This appendix includes not just internal wars (those listed as CW in the *newcow* column), but also colonial wars (ES), and non-state wars (NS).

warname	newcow	polarity	ideology	new state
First Caucasus	CW-500	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Sidon-Damascus	CW-501	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Two Sicilies	CW-502	multipolarity	ideological	new
Spanish Royalists	CW-503	multipolarity	ideological	established
Sardinian Revolt	CW-505	multipolarity	ideological	established
Greek Independence	CW-506	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Egypt-Mehdi	CW-507	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Janissari Revolt	CW-508	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Miguelite War	CW-510	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Murid War	CW-511	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Albanian Revolt	CW-512	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First French Insurrection	CW-513	multipolarity	ideological	established
Belgian Independence	CW-515	multipolarity	ideological	established
Egyptian Taka Expedition	CW-516	multipolarity	nonideological	established

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<sup>1</sup> Version 2.0, updated 5 November 2013; based on Gleditsch (2004).

First Polish	CW-517	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Syrian	CW-518	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Mexican	CW-520	multipolarity	ideological	new
Egypt-Palestinian Anti-Conscription Revolt	CW-521	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Carlist War	CW-522	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Murid	CW-523	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Cabanos Revolt	CW-525	multipolarity	nonideological	new
Farroupilha War	CW-526	multipolarity	ideological	new
Texan	CW-527	multipolarity	ideological	new
First Bosnian	CW-528	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Murid	CW-530	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Sabinada Rebellion	CW-531	multipolarity	ideological	established
Druze Rebellion	CW-532	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Syrian	CW-533/ CW-537	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Argentina War	CW-538/ NS-1527	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Syrian, Phase 2	CW-533/ CW-537	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Lebanon Insurgency	CW-535	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Colombian	CW-536	multipolarity	ideological	new
Second Bosnian	CW-540	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Triangular Revolt	CW-541	multipolarity	ideological	established
Karbala Revolt	CW-542	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Mayan Caste War	CW-545/ CW-553	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Carlist	CW-546	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Two Sicilies	CW-547	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Venezuelan	CW-548	multipolarity	ideological	established
Viennese Revolt	CW-550	multipolarity	ideological	established
Milan Five Day Revolt	CW-551	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second French Insurrection	CW-552	multipolarity	ideological	established
Hungarian	CW-554	multipolarity	ideological	established
Taiping Rebellion	CW-567/ NS-1534	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Chilean	CW-555	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Turco-Montenegrin	CW-556	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Peru	CW-557	multipolarity	ideological	established
Han-Miao War	CW-570/ NS-1537	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Puebla War	CW-558	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Peru	CW-560	multipolarity	ideological	established

Han-Panthay War	CW-571/ NS-1541	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Mexican Reform	CW-561	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Turco-Montenegrin	CW-562	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Venezuelan/Federalist	CW-563	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Colombian	CW-565	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Nien Revolt	CW-568	multipolarity	nonideological	established
U.S. Civil War	CW-572	multipolarity	ideological	established
Third Buenos Aires	CW-573	multipolarity	ideological	established
Third Turco-Montenegrin	CW-575	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Tungan Rebellion	CW-576	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Sioux-Minnesota	CW-577	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Bolivan Perez Rebellion	CW-578	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Polish	CW-580	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Argentina	CW-581	multipolarity	ideological	established
Xinjiang Muslim Revolt	CW-582	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Cretan	CW-583	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Yellow Cliff Revolt	CW-585	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Argentina	CW-586	multipolarity	ideological	established
Queretaro	CW-587	multipolarity	ideological	established
Meiji Restoration	CW-588	multipolarity	ideological	established
Third Venezuelan	CW-590	multipolarity	ideological	established
Spanish Liberals	CW-591	multipolarity	ideological	established
Guerre des Cacos	CW-592	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Argentina	CW-593	multipolarity	ideological	established
Bolivia-Criollos	CW-595	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Paris Commune	CW-596	multipolarity	ideological	established
Third Carlist	CW-597	multipolarity	ideological	established
Cantonalist	CW-598	multipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Argentina	CW-600	multipolarity	ideological	established
Bosnia & Bulgaria Revolt	CW-601	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Diaz Revolt	CW-602	multipolarity	ideological	established
Defeat of Xinjiang Muslims	CW-603	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Colombian	CW-605	multipolarity	ideological	established
Satsuma Rebellion	CW-607	multipolarity	ideological	established
Argentine Indians	CW-608	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Buenos Aires	CW-610	multipolarity	ideological	established
Haitian Civil War	CW-611	multipolarity	ideological	established
Fourth Colombian	CW-612	multipolarity	ideological	established



Peru's National Problem	CW-613	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Yemen Rebellion	CW-616	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Chilean	CW-617	multipolarity	ideological	established
Zaili-Jinden Revolt	CW-618	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Brazil Federalists	CW-620	multipolarity	ideological	established
Brazil Naval	CW-621	multipolarity	ideological	established
Tonghak Rebellion	CW-623	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Peru	CW-625	multipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Colombian	CW-626	multipolarity	ideological	established
Ecuador Liberals	CW-627	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Gansu Muslim	CW-628	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Druze-Turkish	CW-630	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Cretan	CW-631	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Brazil-Canudos	CW-632	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Venezuelan	CW-633	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Yaqui War	CW-635	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Sixth Colombian (War of the 1000 Days)	CW-636	multipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Venezuelan	CW-638	multipolarity	ideological	established
Ilinden	CW-640	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Uruguay	CW-641	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Yemen Rebellion	CW-642	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Bloody Sunday	CW-643	multipolarity	ideological	established
Romanian Peasant Revolt	CW-645	multipolarity	ideological	established
Overthrow of Abd el-Aziz	CW-646	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Iranian Constitution War	CW-647	multipolarity	ideological	established
Young Turks Counter-coup	CW-648	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Albanian Revolt	CW-650	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Asir-Yemen Revolt	CW-651	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Mexican	CW-652	multipolarity	ideological	established
Paraguay	CW-656	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Nationalist	CW-657	multipolarity	ideological	established
Cuban Black Uprising	CW-658	multipolarity	ideological	new
Ecuadorian Civil War	CW-670	multipolarity	ideological	established
Second Nationalist	CW-671	multipolarity	ideological	established
China Pai Ling (White Wolf)	CW-672	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Mexican	CW-673	multipolarity	ideological	established
Southern China Revolt	CW-675	multipolarity	ideological	established
Russia-Turkestan	CW-676	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Russian Civil War	CW-677	multipolarity	ideological	established

Finnish Civil War	CW-680	multipolarity	ideological	established
Western Ukrainian	CW-681	multipolarity	ideological	established
Hungary's Red Terror	CW-683	multipolarity	ideological	new
Green Rebellion	CW-686	multipolarity	ideological	established
Gilan Marxists	CW-687	multipolarity	ideological	established
Kronstadt Rebellion	CW-690	multipolarity	ideological	established
Bashmachi in Turkestan	CW-691	multipolarity	ideological	established
Agrarian Rising	CW-693	multipolarity	ideological	established
De La Huerta Rebellion	CW-695	multipolarity	ideological	established
Honduran Conservative	CW-696	multipolarity	ideological	established
First Afghan Anti-Reform	CW-697	multipolarity	ideological	new
Third Chinese Warlord	CW-698	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Chinese Northern Expedition	CW-700	multipolarity	ideological	established
Cristeros Revolt	CW-701	multipolarity	ideological	established
Ethiopian Northern Resistance	CW-702	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Gansu Muslim	CW-703	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Afghan Anti-Reform	CW-705	multipolarity	ideological	new
Intra-Guomindang	CW-706	multipolarity	ideological	established
Escobar Rebellion	CW-707	multipolarity	ideological	established
Ikhwan Revolt	CW-708	multipolarity	nonideological	new
Chinese Civil War, Phase 1	CW-710	multipolarity	ideological	established
Xinjiang Muslim Revolt	CW-711	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Matanza	CW-712	multipolarity	ideological	established
Aprista Revolt	CW-713	multipolarity	ideological	established
Paulista Rebellion	CW-715	multipolarity	ideological	established
Fukien Revolt	CW-716	multipolarity	ideological	established
Spanish Miners	CW-717	multipolarity	ideological	established
Spanish Civil War	CW-718	multipolarity	ideological	established
Greek Civil War	CW-720	bipolarity	ideological	established
Polish Ukrainians	CW-721	bipolarity	ideological	established
Ukrainian Partisans	CW-722	bipolarity	ideological	established
Forest Brethren	CW-723	bipolarity	ideological	established
Chinese Civil War, Phase 2	CW-725	bipolarity	ideological	established
Taiwan Revolt	CW-726	bipolarity	ideological	established
Paraguay	CW-727	bipolarity	ideological	established
Yemeni Imamate	CW-728	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Costa Rica	CW-730	bipolarity	ideological	established
Seventh Colombian "La Violencia"	CW-731	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Burmese	CW-732	bipolarity	nonideological	new

South Moluccas	CW-733	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Hukbalahap Rebellion	CW-735	bipolarity	ideological	new
Bolivia	CW-737	bipolarity	ideological	established
Indonesia Darul Islam	CW-738	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Argentine Military	CW-740	bipolarity	ideological	established
Tibetan Khamba Rebellion	CW-741	bipolarity	ideological	established
Indonesian Leftists	CW-742	bipolarity	ideological	new
First Lebanese	CW-743	bipolarity	ideological	new
Cuban Revolution	CW-745	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Burmese	CW-746	bipolarity	ideological	new
Iraq-Shammar	CW-747	bipolarity	ideological	established
Vietnam Phase 1	CW-748	bipolarity	ideological	new
First DRC (Zaire)	CW-750	bipolarity	ideological	new
First Laotian	CW-751	bipolarity	ideological	new
First Iraqi Kurd	CW-752	bipolarity	ideological	established
Algerian Revolutionaries	CW-753	bipolarity	ideological	new
North Yemen	CW-755	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Laotian Phase 1	CW-756	bipolarity	ideological	new
First Ogaden	CW-757	bipolarity	nonideological	established
First South Sudan	CW-758	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Second DRC (Jeunesse)	CW-760	bipolarity	ideological	new
First Rwanda	CW-761	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Third DRC (Simba) Rebellion	CW-762	bipolarity	ideological	new
Zanzibar Arab-African	CW-763	bipolarity	ideological	new
Second Iraqi Kurds	CW-765	bipolarity	ideological	established
Dominican Republic	CW-766	bipolarity	ideological	established
First West Papua	CW-767	bipolarity	nonideological	established
First Uganda	CW-768	bipolarity	nonideological	new
First Guatemala	CW-770	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Chad (FROLINAT) Rebellion	CW-771	bipolarity	ideological	new
Cultural Revolution	CW-772/ CW-776	bipolarity	ideological	established
Third Burmese	CW-773	bipolarity	ideological	established
Biafra	CW-775	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Dhofar Rebellion	CW-795/ NS-1577	bipolarity	ideological	established
Third Iraqi Kurds	CW-777	bipolarity	ideological	established
Naxalite Rebellion	CW-778	bipolarity	ideological	established
Black September	CW-780	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Guatemala	CW-781	bipolarity	ideological	established

Pakistan-Bengal	CW-782	bipolarity	nonideological	established
First Sri Lanka-JVP	CW-783	bipolarity	ideological	established
Khmer Rouge	CW-785	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Philippine-Moro	CW-786	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Communist Insurgency	CW-787	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Burundi	CW-789	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Philippines-NPA	CW-790	bipolarity	ideological	established
Rhodesia	CW-791	bipolarity	ideological	new
Baluchi Separatists	CW-792	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Chilean Coup of 1973	CW-793	bipolarity	ideological	established
Fourth Iraqi Kurds	CW-797	bipolarity	ideological	established
Eritrean War	CW-798	bipolarity	ideological	established
Argentine Leftists	CW-800	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second West Papua	CW-802	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Laotian	CW-803	bipolarity	ideological	established
Angolan Control	CW-804	bipolarity	ideological	new
Second Ogaden Phase 1	CW-805	bipolarity	nonideological	established
East Timorese War Phase 3	CW-806	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Ogaden Phase 3	CW-808	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Guatemala	CW-809	bipolarity	ideological	established
Saur Revolution	CW-810	bipolarity	ideological	established
Fourth DRC (Shaba)	CW-811	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Afghan Mujahideen Uprising	CW-812	bipolarity	ideological	established
Overthrow of the Shah	CW-813	bipolarity	ideological	established
Sandinista Rebellion	CW-815	bipolarity	ideological	established
Anti-Khomeini Coalition	CW-816	bipolarity	ideological	established
El Salvador	CW-817	bipolarity	ideological	established
Mozambique	CW-818	bipolarity	ideological	new
Second Chad (Habre Revolt)	CW-820	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Uganda	CW-822	bipolarity	ideological	established
Nigeria-Muslim	CW-823	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Hama	CW-825	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Tigrean and Eritrean	CW-826	bipolarity	ideological	established
Shining Path	CW-827	bipolarity	ideological	established
Contra War	CW-828	bipolarity	ideological	established
Matabeleland	CW-831	bipolarity	ideological	established
Fourth Burmese	CW-832	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Lebanese Civil	CW-833	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Sri Lanka Tamil	CW-835	bipolarity	ideological	established

Second South Sudan	CW-836	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Indian Golden Temple	CW-837	bipolarity	nonideological	established
First Turkish Kurds	CW-838	bipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Iraqi Kurds	CW-840	bipolarity	nonideological	established
South Yemen	CW-842	bipolarity	ideological	established
Holy Spirit Movement	CW-843	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Sri Lanka-JVP	CW-845	bipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Burmese	CW-847	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Somalia	CW-848	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Fifth Lebanese	CW-850	bipolarity	ideological	established
Second Afghan Mujahideen Uprising	CW-851	bipolarity	ideological	established
Third Chad (Deby Coup)	CW-852	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Aceh	CW-853	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Bougainville Secession	CW-854	bipolarity	nonideological	new
Eighth Colombia	CW-856	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Cambodian Civil War	CW-857	bipolarity	ideological	established
Romania	CW-858	bipolarity	ideological	established
First Liberia	CW-860	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Kashmir Insurgents	CW-861	bipolarity	nonideological	established
Shiite and Kurdish	CW-862	unipolarity	nonideological	established
First Sierra Leone	CW-863	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Croatian Independence	CW-864	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Turkish Kurds	CW-865	unipolarity	ideological	established
Second Somalia	CW-870	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Georgia	CW-871	unipolarity	nonideological	new
Nagorno-Karabakh	CW-872	unipolarity	nonideological	new
Dniestrian Independence	CW-873	unipolarity	ideological	new
Algerian Islamic Front	CW-875	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Tajikistan	CW-876	unipolarity	nonideological	new
Bosnian-Serb Rebellion	CW-877	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Liberia	CW-878	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Angolan War of the Cities	CW-880	unipolarity	ideological	established
Second Cambodia Civil	CW-881	unipolarity	ideological	established
Abkhazia Revolt	CW-882	unipolarity	nonideological	new
Second Burundi	CW-883	unipolarity	nonideological	established
South Yemeni Secessionist	CW-885	unipolarity	ideological	established
Second Rwanda	CW-886	unipolarity	nonideological	established
First Chechnya	CW-888	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Croatia-Krajina War	CW-891	unipolarity	nonideological	new

Third Liberia	CW-892	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Sixth Iraqi Kurds	CW-893	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Fifth DRC	CW-895	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Rwanda	CW-896	unipolarity	nonideological	established
First Congo (Brazzaville)	CW-897	unipolarity	ideological	established
Second Sierra Leone	CW-898	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Kosovo Independence	CW-900	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Guinea-Bissau Military	CW-902	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Africa's World War	CW-905	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Chad (Togoimi Revolt)	CW-906	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Angolan	CW-907	unipolarity	ideological	established
Second Congo (Brazzaville)	CW-908	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Aceh	CW-912	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Oromo Liberation	CW-913	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Chechen	CW-915	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Philippine-Moro	CW-916	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Guinean	CW-917	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Burundi	CW-918	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Fourth Rwanda	CW-920	unipolarity	nonideological	established
First Nepal Maoist Insurgency	CW-921	unipolarity	ideological	established
Fourth Liberian	CW-922	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Cote d'Ivoire Military	CW-925	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Philippine-Moro	CW-926	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Darfur	CW-927	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Aceh	CW-930	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Nepal Maoists	CW-931	unipolarity	ideological	established
Waziristan	CW-932	unipolarity	nonideological	established
First Yemeni Cleric	CW-935	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Philippine Joint Offensive	CW-936	unipolarity	ideological	established
Fifth Chad	CW-937	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Third Somalia	CW-938	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Sri Lanka Tamil	CW-940	unipolarity	ideological	established
Somalia	NA	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Second Yemeni Cleric	CW-941	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Pakistan vs. TTP	NA	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Rwanda vs. FDLR	NA	unipolarity	nonideological	established
Ottoman-Wahhabi	ES-301	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Liberation of Chile	ES-302	multipolarity	ideological	NA
First Bolivar Expedition	ES-303	multipolarity	ideological	NA

Mexican Independence	ES-304	multipolarity	ideological	NA
British-Kandyan	ES-305	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Maratha	ES-306	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Ottoman Conquest of Sudan	ES-307	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Bolivar Expedition	ES-308	multipolarity	ideological	NA
First British-Ashanti	ES-311	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Liberation of Peru	ES-312	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Dutch - Javanese	ES-313	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Bharatpuran	ES-314	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Ottoman-Bilmez-Asiri War	ES-320	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First British-Zulu	ES-321	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Sind	ES-326	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Gwalior	ES-329	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First British-Sikh	ES-331	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Cracow Revolt	ES-332	multipolarity	ideological	NA
First British-Xhosa	ES-333	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First Dutch-Bali	ES-334	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second British-Sikh	ES-335	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Chinese Pirates	ES-336	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second British-Xhosa	ES-337	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Ottoman-Yam	ES-338	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
French-Tukolor War	ES-340	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Santal	ES-341	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Hodeida Seige	ES-342	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
French Conquest of Kabylia	ES-345	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Indian Mutiny	ES-347	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Netherlands-Bone	ES-350	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Argentine-Buenos Aires	ES-351	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Garibaldi Expedition	ES-352	multipolarity	ideological	NA
British-Maori	ES-355	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Shimonoseki War	ES-356	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British Umbeyla Campaign	ES-357	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Russian-Kokand	ES-359	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Bhutanese	ES-360	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Russian-Bukharan	ES-361	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First Spanish-Cuban	ES-363	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Attack on Bahr el-Ghazal	ES-364	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Ottoman Conquest of Arabia	ES-365	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Franco-Algerian	ES-366	multipolarity	nonideological	NA

Second British-Ashanti	ES-367	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First Dutch-Achinese	ES-370	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Kokand Rebellion	ES-371	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Egyptian-Ethiopian	ES-372	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Serbian-Turkish	ES-373	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Third British-Xhosa	ES-374	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Egypt-Sudanese Slavers	ES-375	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Russo-Turkoman	ES-376	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Austrian-Bosnian	ES-377	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second British-Zulu	ES-380	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Gun War	ES-381	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Franco-Tunisian	ES-383	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First British-Mahdi	ES-384	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
French-Mandinka	ES-389	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Zambezi Conquest	ES-393	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First Franco-Dahomeyan	ES-394	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Franco-Jolof	ES-395	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Franco-Dahomeyan	ES-396	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Belgian-Tib	ES-397	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Third British-Ashanti	ES-398	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Melilla War	ES-399	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Mahdist-Italian	ES-400	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Dutch-Bali	ES-402	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Portuguese-Gaza Empire	ES-403	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Spanish-Cuban	ES-404	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Japan-Taiwanese	ES-405	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Mazrui Rebellion	ES-406	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second British-Mahdi	ES-409	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Spanish-Philippine	ES-410	multipolarity	ideological	NA
British-South Nigerian	ES-411	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Pathan	ES-412	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Hut Tax	ES-413	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
American-Philippine	ES-414	multipolarity	ideological	NA
French Conquest of Chad	ES-415	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Last Ashanti War	ES-417	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Somali Rebellion	ES-419	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Bailundu Revolt	ES-420	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Kuanhama Rebellion	ES-421	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British Conquest of Kano & Sokoto	ES-422	multipolarity	nonideological	NA



South West African Revolt	ES-423	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second Dutch-Achinese	ES-424	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Younghusband Expedition	ES-425	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Maji-Maji Revolt	ES-426	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Sokoto Uprising	ES-427	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Third British-Zulu	ES-429	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Dembos War	ES-430	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Anti-Foreign Revolt	ES-431	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Japan-Korean Guerrillas	ES-432	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
French Conquest of Wadai	ES-433	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
French-Berber	ES-434	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First Sino-Tibetan	ES-435	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Moroccan Berber	ES-436	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Moro Rebellion	ES-437	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Caco Revolt	ES-441	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Third British-Afghan	ES-442	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
First British-Waziristan	ES-443	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Franco-Syrian	ES-444	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Iraqi-British	ES-445	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Conquest of Mongolia	ES-446	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Rif Rebellion	ES-449	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Moplah Rebellion	ES-450	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Italian-Sanusi	ES-447	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Franco-Druze	ES-451	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Yen Bai Uprising	ES-452	multipolarity	ideological	NA
Saya San's Rebellion	ES-453	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Palestinian	ES-454	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Second British-Waziristan	ES-455	multipolarity	nonideological	NA
Indonesian	ES-456	bipolarity	ideological	NA
French-Indochina	ES-457	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Third Franco-Madagascan	ES-459	bipolarity	nonideological	NA
Malayan Rebellion	ES-460	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Indo-Hyderabad	ES-461	bipolarity	nonideological	NA
Franco-Tunisian	ES-463	bipolarity	nonideological	NA
British-Mau Mau	ES-464	bipolarity	nonideological	NA
Moroccan Independence	ES-465	bipolarity	nonideological	NA
Third Franco-Algerian	ES-466	bipolarity	ideological	NA
French-Cameroon	ES-467	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Angolan-Portuguese	ES-469	bipolarity	ideological	NA

Mozambique-Portuguese	ES-471	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Namibian	ES-473	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Western Saharan	ES-474	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Khmer Insurgency	ES-475	bipolarity	ideological	NA
Soviet Quagmire	ES-476	bipolarity	ideological	NA
First PKK in Iraq	ES-477	unipolarity	ideological	NA
Second PKK in Iraq	ES-479	unipolarity	ideological	NA
Al Aqsa Intifada	ES-480	unipolarity	nonideological	NA
Afghan Resistance	ES-481	unipolarity	nonideological	NA
Iraqi Resistance	ES-482	unipolarity	nonideological	NA
Burma-Assam War	NS-1502	multipolarity	nonideological	established
China-Kokand War	NS-1515	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Buenos Aires War	NS-1503	multipolarity	ideological	new
Siam-Kedah War	NS-1506	multipolarity	nonideological	established
China-Kashgaria War	NS-1508	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Mexico-Yaqui Indian War	NS-1509	multipolarity	nonideological	new
Central American Confederation War	NS-1510	multipolarity	ideological	new
Viang Chan-Siamese War	NS-1511	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Argentine War for Unity	NS-1513	multipolarity	ideological	new
Sayyid Said War	NS-1514	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Argentina-Ranqueles Indian War	NS-1518	multipolarity	nonideological	established
War of Seven Khojas	NS-1533	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Kucha and Khoja Uprising	NS-1543	multipolarity	nonideological	established
First Boer-Basuto War	NS-1544	multipolarity	nonideological	new
First Ethiopian War	NS-1545	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Transvaal War	NS-1548	multipolarity	nonideological	new
Second Boer-Basuto War	NS-1552	multipolarity	nonideological	new
Second Ethiopian War	NS-1553	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Uruguay Colorados-Blancos War	NS-1554	multipolarity	ideological	established
Oman-Ibadi War	NS-1557	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Ethiopia-Mahdi War	NS-1559	multipolarity	nonideological	established
Cheju Rebellion	NS-	bipolarity	ideological	new

## *La Guerra Grande: Uruguayan Civil War, 1843–1851*

### *CHAPTER FOUR*

The 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war is a case of internal war occurring during the multipolar period. The historical record of this conflict can be congruent with or falsify a number of claims made by the theory. The case was selected such that the independent variables – interests, ideology, and sovereignty – could be held at intermediate values that are relatively constant across all three cases. That means that this case had to feature: great power extrinsic interests in the conflict; internal faction appeals for support; a limited intervention; an ideological aspect; decolonization or recolonization as an issue; and, the politics surrounding newly created states. The Uruguayan civil war is a fertile case study upon which to test this dissertation's theory, giving us the ability not only to test how multipolarity affected the international politics surrounding this internal war, but also how multipolarity affected the significance of transnational political ideology and how multipolarity created a proclivity towards formalization of imperial relationships and thereby affected the politics of the civil war.

First, this case features a limited intervention—a defensive blockade—by two great power members of the Concert of Europe, France and Britain. The threat of intervention from

Brazil or the United States was also significant to the politics surrounding Uruguay's conflict. Second, there was a transnational ideological division between the more liberal Colorado party and the conservative populist Blanco party and their respective allies in Argentina and Brazil. And third, Uruguay and Argentina were states created by the Spanish decolonization of Latin America and were both engaged in state-building projects that were continuations of the immediate post-colonial political context. Moreover, Uruguay invited the serious possibility of recolonization by France or Britain.

This chapter begins with a summary of the basic events and timeline of the Uruguayan civil war, and a brief discussion of related conflicts in Argentina and Brazil. It follows with a discussion of the war in its broader context of New World decolonization conflicts, and of liberalism and republicanism as revolutionary ideologies. We then proceed with the analysis in three parts:

Part One examines the effect of multipolarity on the actors' interests, freedom of maneuver, and decision to intervene. The theory expects that external powers weighing an intervention will be driven more by their extrinsic interests in the outcome of the conflict than by any intrinsic value that the country has for them. In this case, Britain and France intervened in Río de la Plata and later ended their interventions for reasons more closely tied to their relations as great powers – the need to fortify their *entente*

Expectations for Multipolarity	
System	
Conflict inherent	Medium
Core complexity	High
Valence of events	Unclear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	High
Periphery relationship	Stability preference
Intervention type	Antirevolutionary/ multilateral
Duration	Shorter
Termination type	Military
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate
Ideology and duration	Shorter
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Formal
New state regime	Exclusion

such that they could cooperate on other issues in Europe – than to their economic interests in Uruguay. Further, the theory expects that interventions in the periphery will be multilateral and in support of the state. The first section therefore details and contrasts the causal weight of the various actors' intrinsic and extrinsic interests in the conflict, and explains how and why the joint intervention was undertaken in support of the Uruguayan government. Additionally, this section illustrates the connection between multipolarity and the freedom of maneuver possessed by involved factions, in this case exemplified by the nimble negotiations of Argentine dictator Juan Manuel Rosas.

Part Two examines the effect of multipolarity on transnational political ideology. The theory expects that ideology will play a role in linking actors together, but will not act as a clear or strong sign of affiliation with a given external power. Ideology should not have the same causal weight that it does during bipolarity. During the Uruguayan civil war, factions were linked transnationally by shared ideological principals—in this case, liberalism. But the clarity and importance of differing ideologies should not be overstated. Both sides were initially liberal, but drifted apart due to their demographic bases, territorial positions, and external allegiances—conflict may have been the source of ideological difference more than vice versa. Further, the ultimate coalition that defeated Oribe and Rosas was ideologically mixed. More importantly, the external powers weighing intervention, and later weighing withdrawal, were not principally motivated by ideological affiliation with the liberal Colorados. Britain, France, and the United States all professed strains of liberalism, but each had a different interpretation of the conflict and different stakes in intervening. Rather than acting in ideological solidarity, the external powers were divided and somewhat manipulable by Rosas.

Part Three examines the effect of multipolarity on the institution of sovereignty, specifically Uruguay and Argentina as relatively new states, the possibilities for recolonization of Uruguay, and the international regime for managing new states. The theory expects to see formal imperialism play an important role in defining the stakes in the outcome of the civil war, especially because multipolarity makes peripheral alignment less clear, and because both Uruguay and Argentina exhibited some of the pathologies of new weak states. During the conflict, recolonization by Britain, France, Italy, Europe, or Brazil were all options, although by the end of the conflict the possibility of French colonization was the most politically salient. The Monroe Doctrine became a political issue, but while recolonization ought to have triggered action from the United States, Rosas was unable to enlist the U.S. on his side over European intervention short of colonization.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the expected results, but also examines why this case study did not meet the theory's expectations for a short duration conflict.

## **Overview of the Uruguayan Civil War**

The Uruguayan civil war began as a dispute between Uruguay's President Manuel Oribe and the former-President José Fructuoso Rivera in 1843. Rivera had held office from 1830–1834. As a buffer state between Argentina and Brazil, Rivera oriented Uruguay's policy toward friendship with Brazil, and balanced against the Argentine dictator Juan Manuel Rosas, even going so far as to allow Rosas's political enemies safe haven in Montevideo. Oribe was Rivera's chosen successor, who took office in 1835. Oribe immediately changed the foreign policy orientation of Uruguay, allying with Argentina, and suppressing Rosas's enemies in Montevideo. He also relieved Rivera of his command of the army. After spending time in

Brazil fighting for the Farrapos insurgency, Rivera returned to Uruguay to depose Oribe in 1838.

From 1840 through 1842, Argentina experienced a civil war in which Rosas was challenged by the armed forces of the province of Corrientes and a number of Argentina's northern provinces. This was just one in a series of Argentinian civil wars during this period—conflicts between Rosas's Federalist party and the opposing Unitarian party recurred frequently, as well as conflicts between the various Argentinian provinces. France was already engaging in a blockade since 1838 because of a different war that Argentina was involved in,<sup>1</sup> but France decided to maintain its blockade when the Argentinian civil war broke out, organizing and supporting Rosas's enemies. France had helped Rivera depose Oribe, and Oribe had fled to Argentina where Rosas put him in command of an army. Rivera and Juan Lavalle (a Unitarian opponent of Rosas who had returned from exile in 1839) led separate armies against Buenos Aires. Lavalle was defeated and killed by 1841. Rivera lasted until December 1842 when Oribe leading Argentina's troops defeated him at the Battle of Arroyo Grande.

The Uruguayan civil war began in 1843 when Oribe led an army of Uruguayans and Argentinians against Rivera, who had retreated back to Uruguay after his defeat. Oribe quickly consolidated control over the Uruguayan countryside and minor ports, and then began a nine-year siege of the capital, Montevideo. Rosas attempted to blockade Montevideo in support of his client Oribe with mixed results. In 1845 fearing victory by the Argentinian client, and needing a project to revitalize their *entente*, Britain and France decided to intervene in Uruguay. They dismantled the Argentinian blockade, blockaded Buenos Aires in return, and undertook

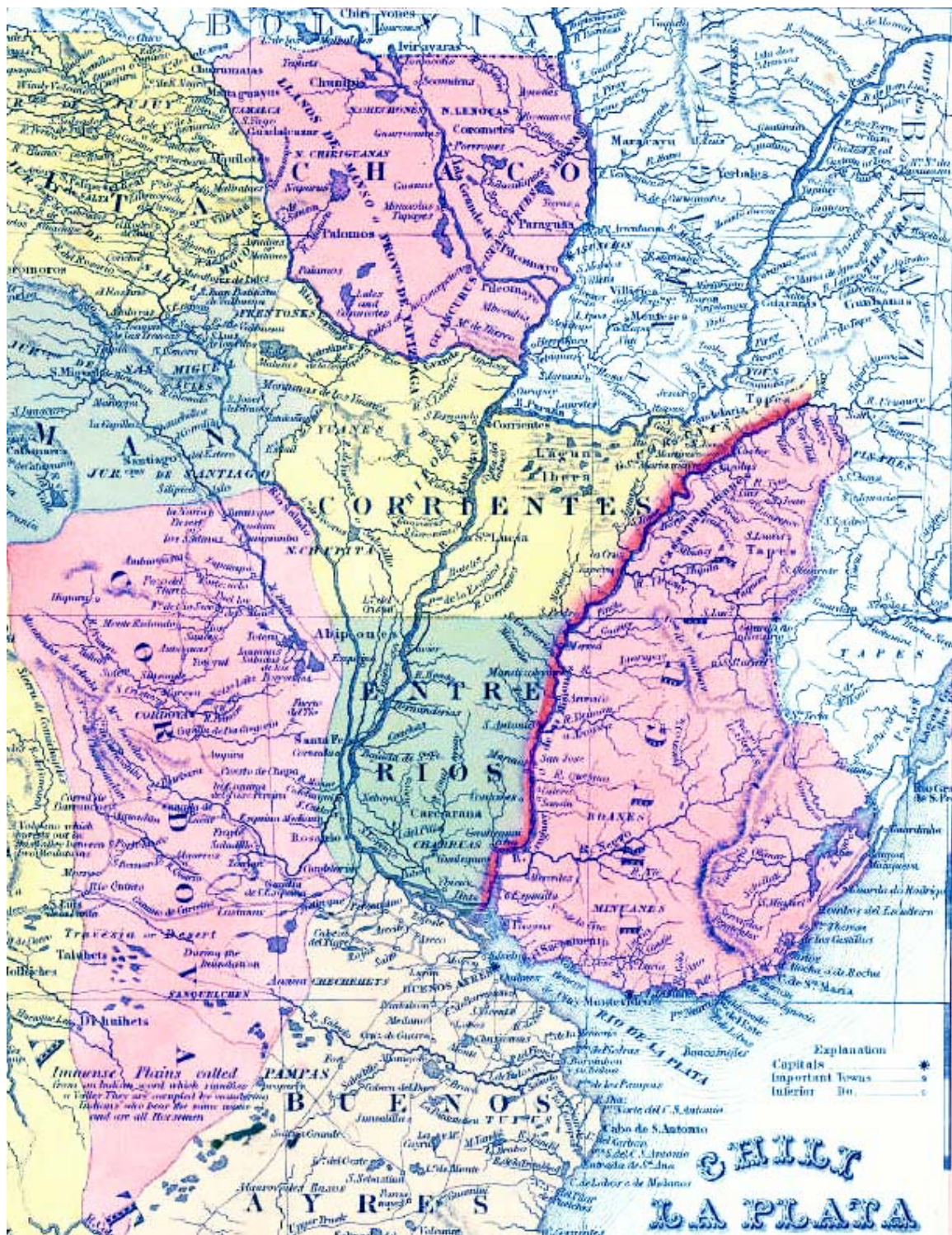
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<sup>1</sup> The 1836–1839 War of the Confederation pitted the Peru–Bolivian Confederation against Chile, Peruvian dissidents and Argentina. Argentina's side emerged victorious.

missions to gain control of and force navigation of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers. But by 1848 (and in the wake of the “Spring of Nations” revolutions throughout Europe), both Britain and France abandoned their blockades of the Río de la Plata as fruitless, allowing Rosas to re-close the Paraná river (the trade route to the province of Entre Ríos, Paraguay, and Brazil’s interior). Both ended up signing peace treaties with Rosas by 1850. Rosas withdrew the Argentinian troops from Oribe’s command, but France still reinforced Montevideo with a garrison and supplies.

Although Rivera had been defeated by Oribe in the countryside, Montevideo – which became known as *La Defensa* – never fell and was garrisoned principally by French and Italian nationals. In 1851, Justo José de Urquiza, governor of the Entre Ríos province of Argentina and a *caudillo* rival of Rosas, turned on his former ally. Urquiza invaded Uruguay, defeated Oribe, and lifted the siege of Montevideo bringing *La Guerra Grande* to a close. Urquiza then organized an alliance with the exiled *anti-Rosistas*, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, and the province of Corrientes. Urquiza, Brazil, and the allies then quickly routed Rosas in Buenos Aires in the brief concluding conflict known as *La Plata War*.





Map detail from: Mitchell, Samuel Augustus, "Chili, La Plata and Uruguay." *A New Universal Atlas Containing Maps of the various Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics of the World*. Philadelphia: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1846. p. 311. Courtesy of the David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

## Related Regional Conflicts and Global Context

The Uruguayan civil war occurred in the context of a number of other prior or concurrent conflicts in the region. Robert Scheina treats the entire period of 1820–1861 as a coherent set of state consolidating wars because of the frequency of conflicts throughout the Río de la Plata region between and within the Argentinian provinces, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and European interveners.<sup>2</sup> The political and ideological divisions have deep roots in the pre-existing Spanish-Portuguese colonial divisions, the geopolitics of the Río de la Plata basin, and the early political divisions among the provinces weighing unity or autonomy in the face of the threat of annexation (see sidebar).

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<sup>2</sup> Scheina (2003), Chapter 9.

### Timeline of Río de la Plata Conflicts

- 1810–1816)** Argentine Wars of Independence from Spain.
- 1810–1811)** Upper Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay begin to pull away from the Río de la Plata.
- 1814–1816)** Artigas' Uruguay leads Santa Fé, Corrientes, and Entre Ríos to form the Federal League and hold out from the 1816 United Provinces of the Río de la Plata led by Buenos Aires.
- 1816–1820)** Unitarian Buenos Aires invades Artigas' Federal League. Portuguese Brazil invades Uruguay and takes Montevideo. Federalist provinces then defeat Unitarian Buenos Aires. The Argentine Confederation results from 1824 Treaty of Pilar.
- 1821)** Portuguese Brazil annexes Uruguay as the Cisplatine province.
- 1822)** Brazil gains independence from Portugal.
- 1825–1828)** The Cisplatine War. Uruguay attempts to secede from Brazil and join Argentina. Argentina and Brazil go to war, Brazil blockades Buenos Aires. France takes the harbor in Rio de Janeiro in response. British mediation results in Uruguayan independence.
- 1829–1831)** Argentine Unitarian League defeated by Rosas' Buenos Aires and Littoral League.
- 1835–1845)** War of the Ragamuffins ("Farrapos"). Republican war for autonomy from the Empire of Brazil in the Rio Grande do Sul province neighboring Uruguay.
- 1835–1838)** Pro-United Provinces Manuel Oribe serves as president of Uruguay. Allied with Juan Manuel Rosas of Buenos Aires. Deposed in 1838 by pro-Brazil former president Fructuoso Rivera with assistance of the French.
- 1838–1842)** French blockade Buenos Aires, organize anti-Rosas forces. Argentine civil war. Unitarians and Uruguayan Colorados defeated by Rosas.
- 1842)** Paraguay declares independence from Argentine Confederation. Rosas refuses to recognize Paraguay. Paraguay allies with Brazil.
- 1843)** Uruguayan civil war begins. Oribe's Blancos lay siege to Colorados of Montevideo.
- 1845–1847/48)** British and French, respectively, blockade Río de la Plata and force navigation of the Paraná river.
- 1849/50)** British and French sign peace treaties with Rosas, respectively.
- 1851)** Uruguayan civil war ends as Entre Ríos invades to defeat Oribe.
- 1851–1852)** La Plata War. Exiled Unitarians, Uruguay, Brazil, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, and Paraguay ally to defeat Rosas in Buenos Aires.

The Uruguayan civil war was a direct extension of the Argentinian civil war of 1839–1842. Exiled Unitarian leaders and dissatisfied provincial leaders declared war on the Federalist Rosas, and launched their campaign against Buenos Aires from Montevideo on French ships, while the French operated a blockade against Buenos Aires. President of Uruguay, Rivera, was leading forces on behalf of the anti-Rosas alliance, but was defeated by Oribe (leading an army on behalf of Rosas) in Argentina at the battle of Arroyo Grande in 1842. The defeat of Rivera in Argentina led to his retreat into Uruguay and the subsequent invasion of Uruguay by deposed president Oribe, backed both by Uruguayan troops and Rosas's Argentinian forces.

Overlapping with the Argentinian civil war and Uruguayan civil war was the 1835–1845 War of the Ragamuffins (*“Guerra dos Farrapos”*) in the southernmost province of the Empire of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. The republican rebels operated freely across the border between Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay in a loose alliance with Rivera's Colorado party, fighting on each other's behalf occasionally and resupplying each other's cavalries with fresh mounts.<sup>3</sup> Once Oribe's the siege of Montevideo began, the fortunes of both Rivera (operating in the countryside of Uruguay) and the Ragamuffins declined. Rivera's force was defeated by Urquiza at the Battle of India Muerta in March, 1845 and he fled to Rio Grande do Sul, only to see that the Ragamuffins had surrendered earlier the same month to the Brazilian General Caxias, an ally of Oribe and Rosas.<sup>4</sup>

The Uruguayan civil war thus cannot be conceived of in isolation: it was an internationalized and transnational conflict from its very inception. The Uruguayan civil war also demonstrates broader significance, not just as a singular case, but as an example of three

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<sup>3</sup> Calogeras (1939), pp. 134, 171.

<sup>4</sup> Calogeras (1939), pp. 170, 172–173; Scheina (2003), pp. 152, 154–155.



major trends of the first half of the 1800s: the post-decolonization conflicts of the New World; the course of revolutionary liberal republicanism in motivating and defining internal wars; and, relatedly the functioning of the Concert of Europe and its breakdown. The New World accounted for about 30% of all intra- and extra-state wars during the multipolar period, a plurality outstripping Europe (20%), Asia (20%), Africa (15%), and the Middle East (15%).

Nearly all of the New World conflicts revolved around statebuilding questions lingering from decolonization, in conflict over the centralization or devolution of power, secession or annexation, or the status of slavery. These conflicts were most often defined in terms of liberalism or republicanism, either varied liberal and republican factions in conflict with each other, or arrayed against conservatives or monarchists. Liberalism and republicanism were prominent revolutionary ideologies throughout the New World, Europe, and a few instances in Asia during the 1800s and beginning of the 1900s. The Concert of Europe, having been established to contain the kind of transnational revolutionary upheaval that upended European order from the French Revolution through the Napoleonic Wars, was the order through which the great powers cooperated to intervene in revolutionary internal wars. But the Concert became less and less functional over the course of 1816–1853.<sup>5</sup> The Uruguayan civil

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<sup>5</sup> The Concert broke down part-by-part. Castlereagh died in 1822, and even though they represented different national interests and different conceptions of international order, when Metternich lost Castlereagh as a counterpart his ability to play the pivotal role in binding together the sovereigns was diminished. The ideological divide between the Holy Alliance and the two more liberal powers, France and Britain, widened quickly and as early as the 1820s undercut the smooth functioning of the order. The congresses ceased after the London Conference of 1832, not to resume until the 1870s. Disputes between the great powers over the justifications for intervention made multilateral intervention a short-lived phenomenon. The Revolutions of 1848 are often marked as the final end of the effective functioning of the Concert as an institution that could coordinate the great powers or remain successful in the face of an assertive bourgeoisie. The 1853 Crimean War—in which the French and British fought Russia on the outskirts of Europe—is also held to be the end of the Concert that was set up to prevent multilateral war between the great powers. Russia observing that Austria sided with her enemies in the Crimean War led to the rapid disintegration of the Holy Alliance. By midcentury the statesmen leading the great powers had changed so substantially that the club of sovereigns had lost its membership: Metternich died in 1859 and Austria was too weak to hold the center; the Second French Republic was overthrown in a coup by the anti-

war overlaps with the Revolutions of 1848 that swept Europe and even manifested in Brazil, and the course of British and French intervention into Río de la Plata was altered by the changing political conditions perceived by the two great powers. The end of the anti-revolutionary Concert marked a changed relationship of great powers toward intervention into the periphery.

The rest of the chapter proceeds in four parts. Part One assesses the structuring effect of multipolarity on the interests of internal factions and external powers weighing intervention into the Uruguayan civil war. Part Two examines whether the effect of ideology on the conflict was shaped by the ideological links between internal factions and the several relevant external powers. Part Three discusses the effect of formal imperial sovereignty on the genesis and course of the war, first whether its status as a new state had important implications for Uruguay's descent into internal conflict or for the manner in which its leaders appealed for assistance, and second, whether the threat of recolonization and the regime for managing new states had a constraining effect on the actors. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings and assess the degree to which the historical record is congruent with the theory's expectations.

## **Polarity and Interests**

The theory expects that multipolarity will shape the interests of both internal factions and external powers in predictable ways. The multipolar balance of power is more complex than bipolarity or unipolarity, and the need for allies is greater in order to pursue balancing

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Concert Napoleon III; neither the Liberal statecraft of Palmerston or the Tory statecraft of Derby was interested in intervention on the Continent; and Prussia was guided by Bismarck who had little use for monarchical solidarity or for following Austria's lead in the German Confederation. See Vincent (1974), p. 341; Kissinger (1957), pp. 312–315; Kissinger (1994), pp. 104, 107, 117, 131–132; Holsti (1992); Finnemore (2003), p. 119; Weber (1995), p. 44; and, Barkin (1998), p. 240.

strategies. Therefore great powers will calculate their stakes in a peripheral conflict and whether or not to intervene according to effects it may have on the international balance of power. This means that their extrinsic interests in the conflict's implications will hold more sway than their intrinsic interests in the country undergoing internal war. Multiple competing great powers allows internal factions to a conflict wider freedom of maneuver in seeking external support. Managing the complex relations between great powers, and facing factions with flexible and opportunistic relations with external powers, leads the great powers to hold a stability preference toward the peripheries. In most cases, the theory therefore expects great powers to intervene in an internal war on the side of the state against the rebels, to do so decisively, and to terminate the conflict militarily instead of through negotiations.

The Uruguayan civil war provides strong – although not total – support for the theory's expectations. Britain and France were motivated to intervene in Uruguay by the need to rejuvenate their *entente* in the face of conflicts with the Holy Alliance. It was their extrinsic interests in Uruguay that defined the course of their involvement in Uruguay, more than their intrinsic (or, as we shall see in the next section, ideological) interests. The great powers intervened multilaterally on the side of the Uruguayan state against the rebels supported and sponsored by neighboring Argentina. But this case does not confirm the theory's expectations for a short conflict duration—the war lasted eight years, which is atypically long for conflicts during multipolarity. Because Britain and France's interests in Uruguay were exceptionally weak, their intervention was limited and defensive. Their actions became uncoordinated and uncooperative, which gave the Argentine dictator Rosas wide freedom of maneuver to play

external powers off of each other—as the theory expects—and Rosas was thus able to toy with their parallel attempts to negotiate an end to the conflict.

This section briefly outlines the security and economic interests of the parties to the Uruguayan civil war and the intervening European great powers, arguing that the economic interests were not sufficient to justify the intervention. It then discusses the Uruguayan civil war as an object of the international politics of multipolarity between Britain, France, and the United States, and the flexibility in negotiation that multipolarity gave to internal factions.

### *INTRINSIC INTERESTS*

All involved actors had intrinsic economic or security interests in the conflict's genesis and stakes in its outcome. The intrinsic economic interests in river navigation motivated the internal factions in Uruguay as well as the different provinces within Argentina. Brazil and Argentina also had security interests in the fate of Uruguay's independence. Rosas especially saw exiled Argentinian *anti-Rosistas* in Montevideo as a threat to his power. Britain and France both had economic interests in trade from the Plata, Paraná, and Uruguay rivers, but the value of this trade was more hypothetical than actual. The French and the United States had limited security interests at stake in the conflict: the French had some concern for their expatriates in Montevideo, while the United States was concerned to an extent with European intervention in the New World (more on this specifically in Part Three below). While various the intrinsic interests were significant to the internal and regional actors in determining the outbreak and stakes of the conflict, the external powers' extrinsic interests were far more significant than their intrinsic interests in determining their interventions into the war.

The intrinsic interests of external powers in Uruguay were rooted in the geopolitics of the river plate. The Uruguay and Paraná rivers linked interior provinces of Argentina, Brazil,

and Paraguay to international trade. The island of Martín García occupied a strategic position at the mouth of the river basin, giving whoever controlled the island the only navigable passage to the rivers. Buenos Aires and Montevideo were the two best natural ports and rival commercial *entrepôts*. The eastern bank of the Uruguay had been a buffer region between the Spanish and Portuguese empires and had begun as a military outpost. It was the strategic outpost for the Spanish in projecting military force throughout Río de la Plata, and Montevideo was very difficult to defeat on land alone without naval power.<sup>6</sup> Were Argentina to control both sides of the Río de la Plata, the Uruguay and Paraná would be internal rivers not subject to international freedom of navigation, enabling Buenos Aires to monopolize trade with the interior. State-building, consolidation or secession, the fate of buffer states, and the prospects for further Argentine-Brazilian conflicts were the stakes of control over both banks of the Río de la Plata.

Argentina's dictator, Juan Manuel Rosas, was a state-builder, attempting to consolidate the strength of Argentina and the strength of his position. Incorporation of Uruguay was an aspirational goal for economic reasons (control of river trade) and security reasons (Uruguay had long been a buffer state between Argentina and Brazil). Rosas had consolidated a hegemonic military position in Buenos Aires, no longer an *estanciero caudillo* but a straightforward military dictator.<sup>7</sup> His ability to win the support of the people by standing up to Britain and France allowed him to continue to consolidate his domestic power, periodically cracking down on suspected Unitarians through his secret security force, the *mazorca*, and

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<sup>6</sup> Rock (1987), pp. 90–91.

<sup>7</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 281; Lynch (1992), pp. 88–89, 251–253,



centralizing all customs revenue from the other Argentine provinces through Buenos Aires.<sup>8</sup>

Rosas was head of the Argentinian Federalist party, and many of his political opponents in the rival Unitarian party had fled to Uruguay. Rosas thus saw Montevideo as the center of *anti-Rosismo*—Unitarians had set up an Argentinian government-in-exile in Montevideo in 1839,<sup>9</sup> widely disseminating propaganda damaging his authority, and frustrating his ability to control navigation of interior rivers.

Despite disclaiming designs on Uruguay, Brazil, Britain, and France all believed that Rosas had plans to bring Uruguay back into the Argentine Confederation.<sup>10</sup> Despite nominally being a Federalist and refusing a formal constitution for Argentina, Rosas nevertheless carried out a nationalist project of reclaiming Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay.<sup>11</sup> Rosas became a real threat to Uruguayan autonomy between his 1835 alliance with Oribe and the 1840 Mackau Convention that ended the 1838–1840 French intervention, which made Uruguay's independence subject to the qualification of “the rights, honor, and security of the Argentine Confederation.”<sup>12</sup> Argentina's domestic conflict between the Federalists and Unitarians was effectively exported to Uruguay when Rosas armed his client and ally Manuel Oribe to fight his own civil war within the territory of Uruguay. During the Uruguayan civil war, one of the key demands in European negotiations with Rosas and Oribe was the removal of Oribe's Argentine troops from Uruguay – conscious of the threat they posed to Uruguayan sovereignty – usually posed in exchange for the disarmament and evacuation of the foreign defenders of

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<sup>8</sup> Lynch (1992), pp. 258–259, 261. The degree to which the *mazorca* was actually terrorizing Argentina is unclear because of the amount of propaganda released concerning it by exiled Unitarians hoping to paint Rosas negatively at home and abroad. Calogeras (1939), pp. 166–167.

<sup>9</sup> Scheina (2003), pp. 118, 120.

<sup>10</sup> Calogeras (1939), pp. 135; López-Alves (1993), p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 169; Lynch (1992), pp. 147, 158.

<sup>12</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 137; Ferns (1960), pp. 246–247; Cady (1929), pp. 87–88.

Montevideo.<sup>13</sup> In 1850, after both British and French blockades had been dropped, Rosas secured funding from the Argentine Confederation to reincorporate Paraguay, whose declaration of independence in 1842 he had refused to recognize.<sup>14</sup> Rosas had both security and economic interests in the fate of Uruguay, and sponsored the civil war to further his state-building goals.

Uruguay's José Fructuoso Rivera was likewise a state-builder, although with lesser prospects and resources than Rosas. Rivera maintained designs on the Entre Ríos and Corrientes provinces (and perhaps even Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul), entertaining the possibility of a 'Greater Uruguay.'<sup>15</sup> For example, France failed to gain the support of key provinces such as Entre Ríos during its earlier 1838–1840 intervention against Rosas—Rivera had insisted on not only being supreme commander of the coalition forces, but also on the detachment of Río de la Plata provinces from the Argentine Confederation.<sup>16</sup>

Brazil and Argentina had a history of warring with each other, which put the Uruguayan civil war into a broader security and historical context. Uruguay was one of three territories operating as a buffer state between the two regional powers alongside Bolivia and Paraguay.<sup>17</sup> Aggravating the security problems between Argentina and Brazil was the chronic problem of uncontrolled borders in the Platine region, allowing revolutionary exiles refuge for the dissemination of propaganda, acquisition of remounts and materiel, and staging grounds for

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<sup>13</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 201–202.

<sup>14</sup> Cady (1929), p. 260.

<sup>15</sup> These territorial goals were nearly the same as the territories that had comprised the 1816 Federal League, created under the leadership of José Artigas. Calogeras (1939), pp. 137, 165, 169; Scheina (2003), p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> Cady (1929), p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> Lynch (1992), p. 267. Uruguay itself was the creation of the British-mediated settlement to the 1825–1828 Cisplatine War, and Paraguay would later suffer the loss of 60–90% of its entire population in the 1864–1870 War of the Triple Alliance.

new attacks on their home countries' regimes.<sup>18</sup> When Oribe succeeded Rivera's first presidency in 1835, he allied with Rosas to curb activities that targeted each other's legal authority, and Oribe placed the exiled Unitarians in Montevideo under strict surveillance. But Rivera and his supporters could simply cross the border to gain support from the Ragamuffins in Brazil, which, consumed by a succession crisis, had not been able to exercise effective control over Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>19</sup> Brazil approached Rosas in 1841 Brazil proposing an alliance against Rivera, who had been allowing the Ragamuffins to operate across the border between Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul. In 1842 Brazil even offered its fleet to Rosas to help in maintaining its blockade of Montevideo. Rosas was initially well-disposed to ally against the "rebel anarchists" threatening them, although he changed his mind after Oribe's 1843 invasion of Uruguay, in part because Rosas (and the Europeans) feared that Brazil desired to re-annex the Banda Oriental and Rosas did not want to legitimize any Brazilian interventions into Uruguay.<sup>20</sup>

The primary economic interest at play in the Uruguayan civil war was the customs revenue from Montevideo. Britain and France landed small forces as part of the garrison in Montevideo to defend the customs house. Rosas blockaded Montevideo during the earlier 1838–1840 French intervention and again during the 1845–1847/48 joint Anglo-French intervention into the Uruguayan civil war. Conversely, the British and French blockaded Buenos Aires. As a result, customs revenues for both Uruguay and Buenos Aires were devastated, while commercial revenues for British and French nationals also collapsed.

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<sup>18</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 134; Scheina (2003), pp. 94, 151.

<sup>19</sup> The Liberal Wars (or War of the Two Brothers, or Miguelite War) lasted from 1828 through 1834. This was a conflict over royal succession fought between constitutionalists and absolutists. It ended in a victory for the liberal constitutionalist faction.

<sup>20</sup> "Banda Oriental" is an earlier name for the territories to the East of the Uruguay river, comprised of what are today Uruguay and Brazil's state Rio Grande do Sul. Calogeras (1939), pp. 168, 174, 177; López-Alves (1993), p. 25; Cady (1929), pp. 15–16, 127–128.

Rosas was not dependent on the mercantile/commercial class, and although revenues dropped, the *estancia* (i.e. landowner estates) economy located in Argentina's interior maintained. But his blockades and tariffs on Montevideo, even if only partially effective, diverted shipping from making its first stop at Montevideo; instead it traveled directly to Buenos Aires.<sup>21</sup> Closing navigation of the Uruguay and Paraná rivers also forced trade from provinces like Entre Ríos to flow through Buenos Aires. This would become a major source of contention between Buenos Aires and economically growing Entre Ríos after Rosas closed the Paraná river in 1845, the Rosario river in 1847, and the Paraná river again in 1848, ultimately contributing to Entre Ríos defecting in 1851.<sup>22</sup>

The central interests of external powers were commercial rights for their nationals and the free navigation of the rivers for the purposes of accessing interior trade.<sup>23</sup> Free navigation of the rivers was the top priority for Britain and Brazil (as well as key littoral provinces like Entre Ríos and Corrientes). When mediating the creation of Uruguay in 1828, the agreement specified that Uruguay would agree to preserve free navigation of the Plata River for fifteen years (while in comparison guaranteeing Uruguay's sovereignty for only five years).<sup>24</sup> The commercial houses of Manchester and Liverpool lobbied Aberdeen in 1844 for a joint

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<sup>21</sup> Rock (1987), pp. 109, 111.

<sup>22</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 184; Ferns (1960), p. 253; Lynch (1992), p. 267; Rock (1987), p. 111; Cady (1929), pp. 207–208.

<sup>23</sup> Rosas' refusal of equal rights for French nationals and merchants was the precipitating cause for the failed 1838–1840 French intervention. Conversely, commercial interests led the British to pressure the French to end their first blockade in 1840. The United States also unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate equal rights for American shipping in 1842 when Rosas reached out to the U.S. for help against Europe. But the U.S. was not interested in commercial treaties with Uruguay or Paraguay, considering the commercial benefits insubstantial or even "mythical." Cady (1929), pp. 38, 160, 182; Ferns (1960), p. 243; Rock (1987), p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> The treaty was a first in instituting the free navigation of a river that serves as an international boundary. Cady (1929), pp. 8; Calogeras (1939), p. 106. Brazil suspected the British of attempting to create a free city (on the model of the Hanse) out of Montevideo in 1828, which would enable them to establish a naval base there. Despite failing in Montevideo, Brazil saw Britain's 1833 seizure of the Falklands as ultimately achieving the same goal. Calogeras (1939), p. 102.

intervention in order to end trade restrictions, secure access to trade with the interior and Paraguay, and to end the civil turmoil disrupting commerce.<sup>25</sup> France placed a slightly lower priority on river navigation than Britain, concerned more with the rights of French nationals, commercial interests, and Uruguay's independence.<sup>26</sup> After the defeat of Oribe and Rosas, free navigation treaties were signed with Britain, France, and the U.S. in 1853.<sup>27</sup>

The security interests for Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil were significant, but as we shall see, not so significant that Rosas would not delay settlement in order to prolong European intervention for his own purposes. Likewise, the economic interests were a central motivation, but would be compromised or abandoned by actors on all sides. Nor did economic interests have a uniform effect, at some times inclining powers toward intervention and at others times away. In order to understand how and why the great powers intervened in the half-hearted way they did, and how Rosas outmaneuvered the Europeans, one must understand the politics of multipolarity that France, Britain, and Rosas faced.

### *EXTRINSIC INTERESTS*

The theory expects that the course of internal wars will be structured by the international system, and cannot be reduced simply to a matter of bilateral relations and foreign policy processes. British and French involvement in Uruguay was almost entirely determined by their need to build constructive relations with each other in the context of the international balance of power, and in relation to their other conflicts with the United States and the 1848 upheavals throughout Europe. When their need for each other as allies waned and their interests diverged, the joint Franco-British intervention in Uruguay unraveled and split, despite

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<sup>25</sup> Ferns (1960), pp. 247–248; Cady (1929), pp. 122–123.

<sup>26</sup> Cady (1929), p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 291; Cady (1929), p. 267.

any intrinsic interests they might have had. France and Britain came to realize that trade with the interior – or even the trade with Buenos Aires and Montevideo – was not so significant to warrant continued intervention. The Uruguayan civil war was an opportunity or a liability only when viewed in the context of great power relations and potential conflicts elsewhere in the world.

In 1844, the British foreign secretary Aberdeen and French foreign minister François Guizot both recognized that Anglo-French relations were under serious strain around the world. They conspired together to renew the *entente* between the two powers by finding an opportunity to undertake joint action. Britain had proposed joint action earlier in opposing U.S. annexation of Texas, but France did not have an interest there. But conflicts between Britain and France in Morocco and in the Pacific were fraying their relationship. A few years earlier, the British had agreed with the Holy Alliance to ally with the Ottoman Empire against Egypt's Mehmet Ali, isolating France and their client.<sup>28</sup> Aberdeen saw the Uruguayan civil war as an opportunity to rebuild the *entente*, and although Guizot had been a critic of his predecessor Adolphe Thiers' 1838–1840 intervention into Río de la Plata, he found it difficult to turn down the British proposal, because he was attempting to defend the *entente* to France's skeptical domestic politics.<sup>29</sup> Actors in the region paid clear attention to Franco-British relations: Brazil and Paraguay could not initially challenge Rosas over Uruguay and free navigation of the rivers, but when Brazil learned in 1844 that the British and French were considering intervention in Montevideo, it fostered a rebellion in Corrientes and organized Paraguay's army in anticipation.

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<sup>28</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 254; Smith (1981), p. 22; Cady (1929), p. 81.

<sup>29</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 256; Cady (1929), pp. 98–99, 124–126, 138, 269.

By 1845, a joint expedition was being called for both by British commercial houses and by the French opposition party, and the decision to intervene was hailed in the British parliament as key evidence that cordial Anglo-French relations had returned. That no clear political objective for the intervention was ever developed, no strategy for the acquiescence of Rosas, no clear mutual understanding on the question of river navigation, and no concept of what the ultimate status of Oribe ought to be agreed to is further evidence that the most important object was Franco-British relations not either's intrinsic interest in Uruguay. The means chosen further argue against a clear goal or strategy: France wanted to maintain a blockade as neutrals involved in mediation only, employing naval pressure on whichever party was obstinate in peace negotiations; Britain wanted to keep Brazil out of the effort despite this clearly undermining their ability to coerce Oribe & Rosas; no measures were authorized other than the blockade and seizure of Martín García.<sup>30</sup> The later decision to force navigation of the Paraná river was another joint expedition, but one that did not have a clear object in coercing Rosas nor tangible commercial benefits, as Rosas simply closed the river again in 1848.<sup>31</sup>

But from the intervention of 1845 on, the popularity of the *entente* declined in domestic politics in both Britain and France. Inability to coerce a lasting ceasefire, much less a peace treaty, led the British to commit themselves even more strictly to neutrality between the warring Uruguayan factions. The British House of Lords switched their sympathies from Montevideo to Oribe and argued that the Paraná expedition undertaken with the French was hurting both their position vis-à-vis the United States on the question of the navigation of the St. Lawrence river and their ability to claim that Britain was a neutral mediator in Uruguay

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<sup>30</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 128–129, 133, 136, 138–140, 142–144.

<sup>31</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 274; Scheina (2003), p. 111; Cady (1929), pp. 158–159.

instead of a belligerent in its own right. The British also decided against committing the necessary troops for the garrison of Montevideo in 1846, again because of concerns over war with the United States, and perhaps by their interests unraveling in the Pacific.<sup>32</sup>

The 1846 electoral victory of the Whigs brought Lord Palmerston to office, which was effectively a deathblow to the *entente*. The British began unwinding their position in Uruguay, which they undertook with the excuse that it had been an illegal act of war. When the British proposed a truce and a formal peace convention, the lack of initial agreement between Britain and France on goals then began to manifest in disagreements over what the demands for a settlement ought to be. The French wanted pacification of Uruguay and free elections before the intervention was ended, but the British vetoed this.<sup>33</sup> The British became wary that the French might try to involve Brazil in the aid of Montevideo, and signaled that they would be willing to aid Oribe in response to any actions by Brazil or the French Foreign Legion. Yet, the British had already shifted responsibility for the defense of Montevideo entirely to the French. Concurrently, the British were negotiating with Oribe for the surrender of Montevideo on the conditions that his Argentine troops withdraw and free elections are held, which prompted the French to object.<sup>34</sup> The British subsequently withdrew their forces entirely in 1847, rendering the remaining French blockade ineffective.

The revolutions of 1848 in Europe and Brazil, as well as the U.S. invasion of Mexico pressed Britain and France toward accommodation with Rosas. When the French government was overthrown in 1848, the truce between Uruguayan factions ended and the French lifted

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<sup>32</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 193–194, 197, 199–200, 207, 269.

<sup>33</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 212–214.

<sup>34</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 218, 226–227.



their blockade as well.<sup>35</sup> The British warned Montevideo against accepting any further French help, and shifted the burden of negotiating with Rosas to the French by ratifying the “Southern Treaty” separately in 1849. France was faced with the choice of either an armed expedition to Uruguay or abandoning Montevideo. They rejected an armed expedition out of fears of precipitating a domestic crisis in France or provoking an international crisis with Britain or the United States (although the British opposition argued that French control would be preferable to Rosas, and that the United States would not be in a position to object, having just invaded Mexico). But the French were reticent to allow Oribe victory, because that would result in British predominance after France had opposed Oribe and Rosas. In 1850 France reinforced Montevideo and maintained relations with Paraguay and Brazil. But once Montevideo communicated to Rosas that they would prefer rule by Argentina to rule by France, the French agreed to sign a treaty of withdrawal and ceased involvement in Río de la Plata.<sup>36</sup> Martín García and the Argentinian warships seized by the British and French were returned to Argentina, the foreign fighters in Montevideo were disarmed and evacuated, and Rosas withdrew the Argentinian troops, but Oribe continued his siege of Montevideo.<sup>37</sup>

Both the initial decision to intervene in the Uruguayan civil war and the subsequent withdrawals of the British and French were driven primarily by Anglo-French relations, and by their need mutual for allies within the international context of multipolarity when facing conflicts with each other, the Holy Alliance, and the United States. As predicted by theory, the joint effort was undertaken as a multilateral intervention on the side of the Uruguayan state.

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<sup>35</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 180; Scheina (2003), p. 121.

<sup>36</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 228, 239, 241–243, 247, 254–255, 259–260, 262.

<sup>37</sup> Scheina (2003), p. 122.

Confounding expectations, the intervention lengthened rather than shortened the civil war: the blockades were ineffective at coercing Rosas, and the Europeans were unwilling to fight a land war or invite Brazilian troops to engage Oribe on land. But this exception confirms the broader rule that the great powers paid closer attention to international relations than to their intrinsic interests in Uruguay: Britain and France were intervening in Uruguay halfheartedly as a project of cooperation, not because of vital interests, hence the unwillingness to commit the necessary resources for a decisive victory or a formal recolonization attempt.

### *FREEDOM OF MANEUVER*

The theory expects that internal factions will enjoy broader freedom of maneuver in multipolarity than in bipolarity or unipolarity. The wider number of great powers capable of intervening gives factions greater freedom of maneuver when appealing for assistance and when negotiating a favorable end to the conflict. Rosas was the most active and adroit party in negotiating with the great powers, despite nearly all other forces being arrayed against him. Rosas played Britain, France, and the United States off of each other, and was increasingly successful as the Franco-British *entente* frayed.

Rosas was a canny negotiator, reaching out at different times to Britain, the United States, and Brazil in order to divide his enemies and sustain his position, at times even using divisions between the great powers to extend rather than end the intervention in order to improve his domestic and regional positions. The fact of foreign intervention began to strengthen Rosas domestically: he discredited Unitarians at home by pointing to their need for European support and deflected criticism of his dictatorship.<sup>38</sup> Rosas's counteroffers to British and French peace proposals during their intervention were designed either to prolong their

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<sup>38</sup> Cady (1929), p. 118.

intervention or to split the two powers. In 1845, Rosas' counteroffer was made with the advice of the U.S. chargé who offered to mediate, a proposal that the British were sure to reject, but Rosas played on their fear of French colonization of Uruguay by noting the large number of French nationals defending Montevideo.<sup>39</sup>

In 1847, Rosas knew that the Anglo-French *entente* has been broken, but also realized that European intervention had helped him domestically gain the support of the people of Argentina and had delayed a ground war with Paraguay and Brazil.<sup>40</sup> Realizing this, he deliberately delayed a settlement by rejecting any clause guaranteeing the independence of Uruguay, and argued that the Paraná river should be wholly controlled by Argentina, while the Uruguay river could be jointly controlled by Argentina and Uruguay (i.e. not subject to free navigation).<sup>41</sup>

When the British tried to negotiate solely with the Uruguayan belligerents, Rosas saw that his authority would be undercut if he were not party to the negotiations—he preferred hostilities to irrelevance. So in 1848, with the European and Brazilian governments in disarray due to the liberal “Spring of Nations” uprisings, Rosas instructed Oribe to cut off negotiations unless the Europeans were willing to settle with Buenos Aires as well. The French unilaterally withdrew their blockade when their government was overthrown in 1848. Consequently, Rosas saw his authority as the protector of Río de la Plata against the Europeans being undermined in the absence of a concrete foreign menace, so he invented an invasion threat as an excuse to place Buenos Aires under martial law. When the British shifted the burden of

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<sup>39</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 147–151.

<sup>40</sup> Rosas and Brazil earlier had a brief understanding about cooperation against Uruguay, but the initial success of Oribe's 1843 invasion meant that Rosas could abandon an alliance with Brazil that would grant them a right to participate in the pacification of Uruguay. Calogeras (1939), p. 168; Cady (1929), pp. 127–128.

<sup>41</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 279; Cady (1929), pp. 217, 219.

settlement entirely the French, Rosas was uninterested in settling—he knew that he sustained authority domestically from continued intervention and he was confident that the British would support him against the French.<sup>42</sup> By 1850, both the blockades had been lifted but the French had reinforced the garrison of Montevideo. Rosas once again attempted to include the United States, arguing that they were obligated to help Buenos Aires against the French, but the United States' chargé responded that the U.S. would provide moral support only.<sup>43</sup>

Although Rosas was not strictly one of the factions internal to the Uruguayan civil war, he nevertheless demonstrates the freedom of maneuver available to parties to the conflict in their negotiations with external powers during multipolarity. Rosas—having convinced Oribe to officially reclaim his title as the legitimate president of Uruguay, reinforced Oribe with Argentinian troops, and sustained him during his siege of Montevideo—was a diplomatically important party in frustrating the European intervention, even though the civil war was ultimately resolved without Rosas (indeed, out of spite for Rosas). He was able to play Britain off of France, and attract late support in the House of Lords for his client Oribe, leaving the French and Montevideo isolated toward the end of the war, making the French seriously consider formalizing an imperial relationship with Uruguay.

Multipolarity structures the interests of actors involved in internal wars in predictable ways, which have a clear impact on the course of the conflicts. Multipolarity creates a high value for allies among the great powers, gives peripheral actors a high freedom of maneuver in their relations with the great powers, and inclines the great power toward imposing stability in the peripheries in order to offset the conflict and uncertainty inherent in core relations. The

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<sup>42</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 237–239, 241, 247–248.

<sup>43</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 260–261.

Uruguayan civil war case demonstrates the effects of a multipolar structure on the course and character of internal war. The need for Franco-British *entente* was a more powerful motivator of intervention than any intrinsic interests in the Río de la Plata, and the half-hearted conflict-prolonging intervention was undertaken precisely because there was no specific object other than great power relations guiding their involvement. The ability of Rosas to play Britain and France off of each other reinforced Buenos Aires' hegemony within Argentina, held off war with Brazil, and enabled Rosas to prolong the war despite the economic consequences of the blockades. The success of Rosas' diplomacy and the duplicitous exit of the British pressed France into considering colonization of Uruguay in order to achieve a clear outcome. However, the potential for conflict with Britain and the United States led them to reject formal colonization.

### *SUMMARY*

The historical record confirms nearly all of the expectations of the theory for the structuring effect of multipolarity on the interests of both internal and external actors. The internal and regional actors had substantial intrinsic interests in the outcome of the Uruguayan civil war, as one would expect. Britain and France were motivated to intervene more by their extrinsic than intrinsic interests, and as we saw they were willing to sacrifice their economic interests in the outcome in favor of satisfying their extrinsic interests. Due to the nature and weakness of their extrinsic interests, the Franco-British intervention lengthened the conflict rather than shortening it, even though they did intervene, as expected, multilaterally on the side of the Uruguayan government against the rebels. The number of great powers capable of intervening – Britain, France, and conceivably the United States – gave Rosas wide freedom of maneuver in negotiations to sustain his position for longer than one would expect.

## **Polarity and Ideology**

The theory expects that multipolarity will have a unique effect on the role of ideology in affecting internal wars, not just defining the internal cleavages, but also in relating the great powers to the factions engaged in conflict. The valence of events in the periphery is often unclear in multipolarity, and multiple great powers can share an ideology (or at least related ideologies). Whereas ideology can be an effective sign of affiliation and alignment in bipolarity, within multipolarity a faction's ideological affiliation could serve many masters. While ideology is important in defining the lines of internal conflict and regional or transnational alliances, it plays an uncertain role in linking great powers to factions. External powers may not sacrifice blood and treasure to support their favored partisans, but if they perceive factions as spreading a threatening or destabilizing ideology they may be more willing to intervene decisively.

The Uruguayan civil war provides strong support for the mixed role that ideology plays within multipolarity. Ideological differences between the Colorados and Blancos came to define the conflict, although it is not clear that they were the principal motivating force. The Colorados became more liberal, and received support from other liberal actors: Argentinian Unitarios, Brazilian Ragamuffins, Garibaldi's Red Shirts, and Britain and France. British commercial liberal interests influenced both Tory and Whig governments on the issue of Uruguay. French Orléanist liberalism and later French republicanism identified with the struggles of the Colorados and Unitarists. The Blancos became less liberal and allied with the conservative Argentine dictator Rosas, as well as the other Argentinian Federalists. But by the end of the conflict, ideological lines had blurred. Federalist governors of Entre Ríos and Corrientes defected to support the liberal Colorados against Rosas. The United States held a moral interest in supporting the cause of republicanism in the Americas, yet it maintained an

official diplomatic position in support of conservative Rosas against Britain and France.

Despite Britain, France, and the United States sharing variant liberal ideologies, their interpretations of the stakes in the Uruguayan civil war were substantially different and were not ultimately significant in decisions regarding intervention, factional support, or withdrawal.

This section discusses how the siege of Montevideo produced heightened ideological divisions between the Colorados and Blancos, how those groups were created out of conflict with Argentina and Brazil, and thus ideologically related to conflicting parties in Argentina and Brazil. It then discusses evidence demonstrating that even though the liberal British and liberal-republican French intervened in support of the liberal Colorados, ideological motivations played almost no role in justifying the intervention, in supporting Montevideo, or in the decision to exit the conflict. Because the major international political ideologies were divided across multiple great powers, the ideologies of internal factions were not effective signals for the alignment or stakes of the civil war, especially in a territory distant from Europe (where a liberal or conservative regime might have greater security implications for the Holy Alliance or liberal members of the Concert).

#### *COLORADOS & BLANCOS: TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN RÍO DE LA PLATA*

The ideological division between the Colorados and Blancos developed not prior to the civil war but over the course of the conflict. The superficial understanding of the conflict simply regards the Colorados as liberal reformers and the Blancos as traditionalist conservatives. But these differences developed after-the-fact. Liberalism was originally common to both parties, and was the dominant ideological current in Uruguay before and after the civil war.

Ideology was not the central cleavage or dispute that precipitated the civil war.<sup>44</sup> The ideological division that manifested – between those who would centralize and liberalize the state as opposed to those who preferred federalism – had more to do with configurations of power related to Uruguay's location as a buffer state, with its history of invasions from Argentina and Brazil, with the control of trade in navigable interior rivers, and with the rivalry between the two largest ports, Montevideo and Buenos Aires.

Before 1820, the two parties did not have differentiated economic or demographic bases. Parties were first and foremost military organizations struggling for control of the state and the port of Montevideo. Both parties operated both within Montevideo and were linked to the countryside, while also featuring internal divisions and cross-party alliances necessary to create a governing coalition. The invasion of Brazil in 1817 and annexation of Uruguay as the Cisplatine Province in 1820 significantly altered the partisan configuration.<sup>45</sup> The

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<sup>44</sup> López-Alves lists important strains in Uruguayan political thought as liberalism, Enlightenment thought, Spanish collectivism, empiricism, positivism, Darwinism, and North American thought including the Federalist Papers. López-Alves (1993), pp. 17–18. Likewise, the Argentinian Unitarians were influenced by liberalism and romanticism. Their ideology featured oligarchic or authoritarian politics, focused on material progress and national unity, was supported Francophilia and European immigration, and drew from Alexis de Tocqueville and the United States. Rock (1987), p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> Uruguay had gained autonomy early during the War of Independence, and already in 1810 the Argentine littoral states of Entre Ríos, Corrientes, and Santa Fé desired the same level of autonomy achieved by Uruguay under José Gervasio Artigas, the first leader of the *Banda Oriental*. The roots of the Federalist party itself lie in Artigas's example and subsequent creation of the Federal League including Uruguay, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Santa Fé, and Córdoba.<sup>45</sup> The Federal League was opposed to the liberal Unitarian *porteños* of Buenos Aires, which had organized the United Provinces of Río de la Plata, consisting of Buenos Aires and the interior provinces.<sup>45</sup> The Argentine civil war of 1816–1820 occurred when Buenos Aires, under the leadership of liberal Unitarian Rivadavia, delayed in responding to the Brazilian invasion of Uruguay because they perceived Artigas as a threat. Artigas responded by declaring war on the United Provinces. Uruguay was lost to Brazil, but the United Provinces were defeated by Entre Ríos and Santa Fé who then imposed the Federalist Argentine Confederation in place of the Unitarian United Provinces. Many of the Unitarians and *porteños* of Buenos Aires would ultimately flee to Montevideo, making the city that spawned the Federalist movement the new haven of Unitarian resistance, while Buenos Aires fell under the control of the Federalist Rosas. The 1851 alliance between Uruguay, and the Argentine provinces of Entre Ríos and Corrientes that finally ended both the Uruguayan civil war and Rosas' reign in Buenos Aires represented an ideological reversal from the initial ideological orientations of these actors. While the partisan positions switched from 1816–20 to 1843–52, the geographical groupings remained similar: Buenos



*abrasilerado*–*aportenido* distinction—those oriented toward Brazil versus those oriented to the interests of the port city of Montevideo—became an important cleavage, as the Colorados under Rivera allied with the Brazilian Baron Carlos Lecor, while the Blanco *aportenados* rejected Brazilian occupation in favor of Argentina. These orientations toward Brazil and Argentina persisted in Uruguayan partisan politics through to the 1910s.<sup>46</sup>

Rivera and Oribe did not initially have a problematic relationship. Rivera's presidency saw the adoption of the liberal Constitution of 1830 (modeled after Bernardino Rivadavia's scrapped constitution for Argentina).<sup>47</sup> During his administration, he refused to curb the activities of exiled Unitarians, angering Rosas in Buenos Aires.<sup>48</sup> After his first presidency 1830–34, Oribe was Rivera's handpicked successor. Oribe's presidency lasted from 1835–1838 until he was deposed by Rivera. In office, Oribe had allied with Rosas and suppressed the exiled Unitarians that had fled Buenos Aires to Montevideo, even restricting their ability to criticize Rosas in the Uruguayan press.<sup>49</sup> He also relieved Rivera of his position as commander of the army. The Oribe-Rosas alliance contributed to Rivera's coup, especially because of Rivera's *abrasilerado* orientation (although during the period of Oribe's presidency, Rivera had crossed the border into Rio Grande do Sul to fight alongside the Farrapos against the central

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Aires was defeated by a combination of Uruguay, Entre Ríos, and Corrientes among others. Rock (1987), pp. 85, 91; Lynch (1992), p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> López-Alves (1993), pp. 20, 24–26.

<sup>47</sup> The Uruguayan constitution was liberal for the time. It was a product of an alliance between prominent rural landowners (*caudillos*) and the foreign mercantile interests of Montevideo. It restricted the franchise in a rejection of populism and democracy, but this was not inconsistent with liberalism at that time. The constitution's major liberal elements include: the liquidation of *fueros* (i.e. private laws, privileges), emancipation of slaves, liberal interest rates, bread prices, emphyteusis system for public lands, lower duties and tariffs, religious toleration, and acceptance of the carnival. Bushnell (1983), pp. 68–72.

<sup>48</sup> Cady (1929), p. 15.

<sup>49</sup> Bushnell (1983), p. 69; Cady (1929), p. 15.

government of Brazil).<sup>50</sup> Rivera returned to depose Oribe in 1838 with the assistance of the French (who occupied the strategic island of Martín García), and 14,000 Unitarian exiles (the total population of Uruguay being only 75,000). Some sources suggest that he may have been on the payroll of the Brazilian government, one piece of evidence for this being his initial attempt to improve Uruguayan-Brazilian relations by breaking with the Farrapos.<sup>51</sup>

Rivera then supported the littoral provinces in their civil war against Rosas from 1840–42 (and it was during this time that Garibaldi traveled from Rio Grande do Sul to Montevideo). The anti-Rosas alliance of Colorados, Unitarians, and littoral provinces of Argentina was organized in Montevideo by the French, transported by French ships, and aided by a French blockade of Buenos Aires, along with Uruguayan naval action led by Garibaldi.<sup>52</sup> After having been deposed, Oribe had fled to Argentina where Rosas put him in command of an army. During the Argentinian civil war, it was Oribe's forces that defeated the army led by Rivera at Arroyo Grande and forced Rivera's retreat back to Uruguay.

The Uruguayan civil war began when Oribe pursued Rivera following Arroyo Grande and laid siege to Montevideo beginning in 1843. It was during this siege that the geographic (*porteños–provinciales*) and demographic (*foreign–Oriental*) differences resulted in the ideological cleavage between the Colorados and Blancos. Originally a rural party founded by

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<sup>50</sup> The gauchos who inhabited the area ignored the political boundaries between Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay. They allied with European revolutionaries who had been exiled by their home governments and fought for autonomy. There was a back-and-forth exchange of political agitators who exposed *Riograndenses* and Orientals to republican ideals along with easy arms sales. During Oribe's presidency, Rivera traveled to Rio Grande do Sul and allied with Farrapo military leader Bento Gonçalves (Giuseppe Garibaldi was another of Gonçalves' allies in this period). Argentinian Unitarians, Uruguayan Colorados, and the Farrapos allied to defeat a Brazilian force in 1836 at Porto Alegre. Scheina (2003), pp. 151–152; Calogeras (1939), p. 133.

<sup>51</sup> The Brazilians, however, had reason to believe that Rivera still maintained agreements with the Ragamuffins in secret after 1838. Calogeras (1939), pp. 135, 165; Ferns (1960), pp. 242–243; López-Alves (1993), p. 35; Cady (1929), p. 38–40, 44–45.

<sup>52</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 244.

the *caudillo* Rivera, the Colorados became an urban party almost entirely located in Montevideo. Because of this, its constituency came to include a large number of foreigners, and transformed into a cosmopolitan, liberal, pro-European, modernizing party—the European garrison was organized with the French Foreign Legion, the French Basques, and the Italian “Red Shirts” under Garibaldi.<sup>53</sup> The Blancos became the party of the countryside and its rural demographic. They promoted the idea that they were the defenders of the national, indigenous, Oriental interests, despite the large majority of their troops actually being Argentinian. Representing the rural demographic, the Blancos demanded a reform of the Constitution of 1830, while the Colorados continued to back the liberal but franchise-restricting constitution.<sup>54</sup> Freedom of the press and legislative independence remained respected during the siege, and the ideological development of the two parties was carried out in public view.<sup>55</sup>

The ideological division between the Colorados and Blancos was not a pre-existing political division—both were initially liberal parties—and the political differences between the two were a result of the siege of Montevideo affecting their demographic, geographic, and economic bases, not a prior condition motivating the civil war. Nevertheless, the resulting ideologies did foster transnational affiliations that affected regional threat perceptions and alliances. While ideology did have an effect regionally, it did not have the same affect in attracting the support of the British, French, or United States or shaping their perceptions of the stakes involved.

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<sup>53</sup> Ferns (1960), pp. 262–263; Cady (1929), p. 112; Benton (2001); Oddone (1994); Morgan (1983).

<sup>54</sup> López-Alves (1993), pp. 37, 55.

<sup>55</sup> Bushnell (1983), p. 69. See for example the debate between the Colorado Manuel Herrera y Obes and the Blanco Bernardo Berro, printed in the newspapers *El Conservador* and *El Defensor de la Independencia Americana* over the course of 1847–48. Herrera y Obes and Berro (1966).

*BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND THE UNITED STATES: IDEOLOGY AND AFFILIATION*

Despite ideological dividing lines emerging over the course of the conflict, external powers did not make ideology a primary factor in determining their justifications for intervention, for non-intervention, or for their decisions to negotiate an exit. At different times the liberal great powers were willing to make peace with dictators, consider supporting the enemies of the liberal factions, and abandon liberal forces while their victory or defeat was still uncertain. More important for each great power was its relationship relative to other powers, to securing their national interests in the Río de la Plata, and to ending upheaval regardless of the ideological outcome. While their diplomatic agents were often openly ideological and exceeded their orders in the pursuit of principle, the governments of Britain, France, and the United States did not see the pursuit of ideological goals as trumping their intrinsic or extrinsic interests in Uruguay. The intervention into Río de la Plata occurred within the context of multipolarity, in which the actors were ideologically similar enough (each falling along a spectrum of conservative economic liberalism to strident republicanism) that the potential imposition of a regime in Uruguay or Argentina was not a vital threat to the other great powers.

Britain's liberalism was manifested less in their commitment to self-determination or democracy in Río de la Plata, and more in their commitments to trade treaties, free navigation of rivers, the restriction or banning of slavery, and free practice of religion.<sup>56</sup> Of these issues, only the free navigation of rivers played a major role in Britain's decision to intervene in Uruguay, exemplified by the seizure of the strategically positioned island Martín García and by

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<sup>56</sup> Smith (1981), pp. 16, 30.

the Paraná river expedition.<sup>57</sup> The commercial lobbies of Manchester and Liverpool played a role in 1844 in pressing the government to begin its intervention, but later lobbied to end British intervention. The blockade was ultimately seen as more damaging to their commercial interests than a victory of Rosas's client Oribe, because they expected that the two leaders would still allow free navigation of the rivers upon Oribe retaking his office.<sup>58</sup> Britain's liberal opposition to the slave trade also affected the course of the Uruguayan civil war. Britain attempted to negotiate a new commercial treaty with Brazil that would restricting any trade based on slave labor with a punitive tariff. Britain sticking to this principle soured their relations, resulting in Britain deciding against including Brazil in the joint intervention undertaken in 1845, despite certainly knowing that this would hamstring the effectiveness of any effort to coerce Rosas.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, Britain was not motivated to intervene or extend their intervention out of liberal alignment with the Colorado or Unitarian causes, and perceived no significant stake in the victory of either Montevideo or Oribe as long as free navigation of the rivers could be secured and trade-interrupting civil strife ended.<sup>60</sup>

France's ideological commitment was more complex and genuine than Britain's, leading them to intervene earlier, persist longer, and consider more radical options for resolution of the conflict. France itself underwent substantial shifts in government in the middle of the intervention: the bourgeois Orléanist July Monarchy was overthrown in the radical republican

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<sup>57</sup> Ferns argues that there was no convincing evidence that free navigation beyond Buenos Aires gave Britain any significant economic opportunities, or that it had any concrete injury on Uruguay or Brazil. As such, he concludes that the issue was significant because Britain of the 1840s tended to interpret issues through the terms of *laissez-faire* economics, and that this worldview "seems to be the only rational explanation of the concern for free navigation." Ferns (1960), p. 253.

<sup>58</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 122–123, 197.

<sup>59</sup> Calogeras (1939), p. 177; Ferns (1960), p. 267; Cady (1929), pp. 123, 129–133, 139.

<sup>60</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 247; Smith (1981), pp. 24–25.

and socialist uprising of 1848 and replaced with the Second Republic until 1851 when Napoleon III suspended the republic and established the Second Empire. Even during the Orléanist period, domestic insurrections by republicans caused the government to fall several times, leading to a back-and-forth between republican-sympathetic Adolphe Thiers and the Doctrinaire (i.e. liberal constitutional monarchist) François Guizot.

The liberal Orléanist government did see itself as in competition with the aggressive and independent American spirit of republicanism, in some ways mirroring their domestic Orléanist-republican conflict. They saw themselves in competition with the republican United States to prevent U.S. domination of the Americas, and prevent any further frustration of France's ability to exercise influence in Latin America.<sup>61</sup> France's 1838–1840 intervention into Río de la Plata saw them allying with the Colorados and Unitarians, but this was done for commercial rights parity with the British, not out of ideological sympathy. As early as 1841, the French admiral involved in the first intervention proposed a joint second intervention with the British to quell the violent upheaval, not because one or the other faction was in imminent danger of defeat, but because the violence was disrupting trade.<sup>62</sup>

The *entente* was destroyed by the 1846 election of the Whigs and Palmerston, thereby removing the principal reason that France and Britain had undertaken the joint intervention in the first place. The French government continued to issue instructions that any peace treaty must include Uruguayan independence and free elections even if Argentina were to be allowed territorial rights over interior rivers—this represented a reversal of Britain's priorities.<sup>63</sup> The

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<sup>61</sup> Cady (1929), p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> Cady (1929), p. 92.

<sup>63</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 92, 212–216.

1848 revolutions interrupted French diplomacy and gave Rosas another opportunity to attempt to split the British and the French during negotiations. Napoleon's government during the Second Republic was concerned about French nationals in Uruguay and about British advantage if Oribe were to take Montevideo, but France was not markedly more or less concerned about free elections in Uruguay, despite the domestic revolution and ideological change of France's government from liberalism to republicanism.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the liberal republicanism of the United States, the U.S. government pursued a non-interventionist policy toward Río de la Plata. Presidents Polk and Tyler remained unswayed by the prior rhetorical commitment of President Monroe to defending the cause of self-determination in the Americas, by the opportunistic criticisms coming from the Democrats in opposition to Tyler, and by the sympathy of the public for the cause of Rivera. On balance, Manifest Destiny took precedence over the Monroe Doctrine during this period.<sup>65</sup> Deviating from the official position of the government, the U.S. diplomats operating in the region were far more motivated by the defense of the Americas from European intervention, to the point that the British perceived U.S. agents as tools of Rosas and therefore objected to U.S. mediation.<sup>66</sup> The congressional Democrats argued in 1845 that European intervention in Río de la Plata was the same type of meddling that had aimed to deprive the United States of Texas. Even if Europeans disclaimed territorial acquisition, Democrats argued that the administration must still reject the "European system of making and unmaking governments at pleasure" and counter the European balance-of-power from being installed in the Americas. However, Polk

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<sup>64</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 251, 255.

<sup>65</sup> Dent (1999), p. 22.

<sup>66</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 148, 150, 165–166, 168,

was only prepared to give moral influence, issue diplomatic protests, and offer mediation. But by 1847, even the U.S. press was unmoved by the possibility of an armed French intervention beyond just the blockade.<sup>67</sup>

### *SUMMARY*

The theory expects that during multipolarity ideology will have an effect, but less intensely than within bipolarity, and subject to greater indeterminacy. As we have discovered, ideology played an important role in defining transnational alliances in the Río de la Plata region, but did not determine the international alliances between great powers and internal factions. Britain and France attempted to maintain at least cordial relations during the period of the Concert of Europe in order to balance the Holy Alliance's conservative regimes in Austro-Hungary, Prussia, and Russia. This incentivized them to cooperate where possible, and it played a role in inclining Thiers and Aberdeen to renew the *entente* by finding project they could undertake jointly. Ideology did determine some of the issues that were important to the great powers, but not uniformly—free navigation was most important to the British, free elections to the French, and freedom from European intervention to the United States. But none of the powers were willing to force those issues: after the Paraná expedition, Rosas re-closed river navigation; the French departed without having lifted the siege of Montevideo; and non-interference trumped non-intervention as the principle guiding the United States. Moreover, the British were willing to switch from the liberal Colorados of Montevideo to Oribe's more conservative Blancos if river navigation could be secured. The United States gave its moral and diplomatic support not to the liberal Colorados or Unitarians, but to the conservative Rosas because he was the only figure capable of resisting the European powers.

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<sup>67</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 182–183, 188–189, 222–223, 229.



Despite all the external powers falling on the liberal–republican continuum, they were in sharp disagreement with each other regarding Uruguay.

## **Polarity and Sovereignty**

The theory expects the institution of sovereignty to be configured differently within multipolarity than in bipolarity or unipolarity. First, there ought to be a proclivity toward formalizing imperial relationships between great powers and peripheral clients. This proclivity exists because of factors previously discussed: the complexity of core relations, the unclear valence of outcomes in the periphery, the broad freedom of maneuver possessed by internal factions, the stability preference exhibited by great powers toward the periphery, and the indeterminacy of ideology as a signal of alignment. Because of the difficulty in clarifying relations, especially during periods of instability, great powers have an incentive to impose formal colonial status on countries undergoing an internal war. Even if colonization is not overtly threatened, the possibility still ought to shape the actions of both rival great powers and internal factions seeking external assistance. Further, the possibility of recolonization of new states led to the attempted creation of a new state regime of exclusion—once these territories gained independence from European colonial powers, their formal independence ought to be off-limits. Nevertheless, when facing serious internal threats, new states still engaged in state-building will be willing to seek assistance from external powers that threatened (or had earlier threatened) their independence—i.e. ‘omnibalancing.’<sup>68</sup>

The Uruguayan civil war provides strong support for the effect that multipolarity has on the institution of sovereignty. The reconcentration in power following the Napoleonic

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<sup>68</sup> See David (1991a), pp. 6–7, 14; and, David (1991b).

Wars, involving the decline of some great powers and the rise of other, made possible the conditions for the Uruguayan civil war. The new states created in Latin America were engaging in the process of state-building, and experienced a number of internal conflicts that had their roots in the initial independence struggles. These conflicts – frequently involving the issues of constitutional design and the balance between structurally federal or unitary states – opened the possibility for foreign intervention that could result in recolonization. Uruguay declared independence early in the Latin American wave of decolonization, and had to navigate between annexation as a republic of Brazil, integration with the federation of Argentine provinces, or attempting to maintain its own independence. When the threats from Brazil, Argentina, and internal upheaval became too great, there were several occasions upon which formal recolonization by European powers was advocated. Toward the end of the civil war, the French seriously considered establishing Uruguay as a colony. The Monroe Doctrine became a political issue that affected great power calculations, even if the United States was openly unwilling to enforce it. Both Uruguay and Rosas, when attempting to gain an edge against internal threats, sought support from external powers that had threatened their sovereignty and power—in effect, using the external power to balance against domestic threat.

### *NEW STATES*

The theory and quantitative chapters have made the case that the broad historical patterns of internal war incidence should be examined in terms of their continuity with extra-state wars. The Uruguayan case demonstrates that the roots of the conflict lay in the initial political cleavages that emerged during and immediately following their independence. Because the state-building projects were still ongoing and the status of some provinces unstable, the line between intra-state, extra-state, and inter-state war was blurred.

The 1843 Uruguayan civil war just barely counts as a “new state war” for the purposes of this dissertation, slightly under fifteen years having elapsed since Uruguay’s independence (a result of the 1825–1828 Cisplatine War). The Uruguayan civil war illustrates the issues challenging newly decolonized states within the context of multipolarity. The Río de la Plata region faced the problem of consolidation or division across many of the provinces of the former Spanish Viceroyalty and Southern Brazil. Interior provinces, littoral provinces and the province of Buenos Aires were in constant conflict. Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay pulled away early, becoming buffer states between Argentina and Brazil. Brazil faced problems stemming from its earlier annexation of Uruguay as the “Cisplatine province,” and within the neighboring southern province of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. Many of the political entities of the Río de la Plata were – if not formally states – at least state-like entities in their relations, whether inside the Argentine Confederation or not. State-building was the central concern for Rosas and Rivera, leading both to exhibit behavior that could be explained by omnibalancing. While Río de la Plata had undergone decolonization, that did not mean that it was free from recolonization by another imperial power. The possibility of French, British, or Brazilian imperial sovereignty over Uruguay played a significant role in the political calculations of Colorados, as well as those between Argentina, Brazil, Britain, France, and the United States.

The conflicts within Argentina and within Uruguay (and to a lesser extent within Brazil) were civil wars fought as interstate wars—the inception and the solution to the civil wars ultimately lay outside of the states they were fought in. Despite formal independence and official denials by all parties involved, Uruguay’s sovereignty was in question by Rosas and Oribe, Brazil, and even the government of Montevideo itself. The provinces of the Argentine

Confederation, although ostensibly subordinate to the foreign policy of Buenos Aires, often acted as sovereign political actors with independent foreign policies and alliances with foreign powers. Transnational political entities – including Unitarian exiles, disaffected Uruguayans, French nationals, Garibaldi and the Red Shirts, Colorados, and Ragamuffins – crossed Uruguayan borders to Argentina and Brazil throughout the course of *La Guerra Grande*. David Lemke argues that the state-like entities of the Río de la Plata region can be thought of as an international subsystem, rather than attempting to strictly define which entities are states, colonies, and non-state actors, and then using that to categorize conflicts as inter-state, intra-state, extra-state, or non-state.<sup>69</sup>

### *RECOLONIZATION*

The theory expects that multipolarity will create an incentive for intervening powers to engage in formal colonialism with the goal of stabilizing their relationship in otherwise turbulent peripheries. The Uruguay case illustrates this dynamic, showing that both internal factions considered requesting colonial status, and intervening powers considered colonization in order to clarify their rights and obligations. Each major external actor (with the exception of the United States) feared the designs of other powers not just in exercising influence in Uruguayan politics but in establishing a formal imperial sovereignty over the territory.

Understanding the reality of recolonization in the New World, the United States and Britain

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<sup>69</sup> Lemke (2008). The most recent edition of *Correlates of War* attempts to strictly categorize the entities of the Río de la Plata region in order to place the conflicts in these categories. This leads to an otherwise continuous series of regional conflicts to be divided across four categories, some changing categories two or three times over the course of a single conflict. The conflict studies here begins as the 1839–40 non-state Anti-Rosas war, becoming the 1841–1842 intra-state Argentine Civil War, then the 1843–51 extra-state Uruguayan civil war (the concurrent and connected 1835–45 War of the Ragamuffins is treated as inter-state), finally concluding with the inter-state 1851–52 La Plata War. Despite each conflict listed involving the same broad set of actors, with only the center of gravity of the conflict changing, it is nevertheless separated into 4-5 different conflicts, each supposedly a different type of war because of a slightly different configuration of combatants to sovereignty/statehood in each phase. Sarkees & Wayman (2010), pp. 83, 216–217, 354, 357–358, 502–503.

had collaborated on promulgating and enforcing the Monroe Doctrine. While the British warned France off of colonizing Uruguay, the United States was both unwilling and incapable of preventing Britain and France from intervening militarily in the civil war. Nevertheless, the existence of the regime was politically salient to both Rosas and France in their calculations.

The primary factor making recolonization a viable option was the heavy European immigration to Uruguay: Spanish, French, Italians, Portuguese, Brazilians, German, and British. In 1839 Italians immigrants were larger than any other group of foreign nationals. By 1843, French observers noted that there were more French nationals in Uruguay than in their formal colony of Algeria.<sup>70</sup> At some times, the Uruguayan civil war reflected less the disputes between Uruguay and Argentina and more the conflict between native Uruguayans and the foreign immigrants of Montevideo, who comprised 80–90% of the city's population.<sup>71</sup> In 1846, during the siege, there was a brief insurrection within Montevideo between the Europeans and Orientals, requiring Rivera to land and retake Montevideo. (He was opposed by the French and British troops garrisoning the city, but supported by the French Basque immigrants who declared themselves for Rivera.) As the siege wore on, frictions with the Europeans led to increasing numbers of Oriental desertions to Oribe.<sup>72</sup>

When in exile, both Colorado and Blanco parties at one time or another openly favored the establishment of a moderate monarchy under a given foreign power—ideas included: an Italian protectorate, a British protectorate, a combined European protectorate, a monarchy under an Italian or British prince, or even a monarchy under Brazil. Most of the proposals

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<sup>70</sup> Ferns (1960), pp. 240–241; López-Alves (1993), p. 10; Dent (1999), p. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 262.

<sup>72</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 205, 207.

came from Montevideo, owing to its cosmopolitan character and its desire to be a free port without responsibility for the interior.<sup>73</sup> During the 1838 civil strife accompanying Rivera deposing Oribe, and again in 1940 during the Argentinian civil war, Uruguayan diplomats approached Britain about becoming a protectorate in order to end their civil strife.<sup>74</sup> After the 1842 defeat at Arroyo Grande, Rivera had offered commercial treaties to France and Britain in exchange for formal protection. The two powers declined, despite later intervening to protect their commercial and navigation interests.<sup>75</sup>

Following the defeat of Napoleon, British imperialism in Latin America had the goals of obtaining commercial agreements, special rights for its citizens, and religious freedom without being entangled in formal imperial arrangements. Britain defended the sovereignty of the newly decolonized republics of the Americas in an effort principally to deny recolonization to its European rivals. For example, in 1823, France occupied Spain following the supposedly republican military coup against Ferdinand VII and the decision of the Concert of Europe at the Congress of Verona to intervene; observing this, the British warned the French against extending their occupation of Spain in an effort to re-impose European rule in Latin America.<sup>76</sup>

Rosas attempted to divide Britain and France during their blockade, highlighting the large number of French nationals defending Montevideo, and suggesting that the French were ultimately interested in colonizing Uruguay.<sup>77</sup> The French ministers in opposition argued that the government's attempt to claim neutrality was a sham, failing to relieve French nationals and

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<sup>73</sup> López-Alves (1993), p. 55.

<sup>74</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 20, 94.

<sup>75</sup> Scheina (2003), p. 120.

<sup>76</sup> Smith (1981), pp. 29–30.

<sup>77</sup> Ferns (1960), pp. 268, 271; Cady (1929), p. 149.

commercial interests in Uruguay, “a veritable French colony.”<sup>78</sup> By 1847 the French had been abandoned by perfidious Albion in the defense of Montevideo. British duplicity in negotiating the surrender of Montevideo to Oribe raised French prestige in Montevideo to the degree that observers believed France might try to convert Uruguay into a colony or ally with Brazil to place it under Brazilian suzerainty. France considered these scenarios unrealistic because of their unpopularity in Latin America and the certainty of British opposition.<sup>79</sup> Indeed, Palmerston had issued instructions to the British naval commander to seize the city of Colonia if the French attempted to occupy Montevideo.<sup>80</sup> France also considered armed expeditions in 1847 and 1849, but both times came to the conclusion that it would lead to Uruguay becoming a French colony, which they considered impractical because it would lead to an international crisis with one or both of Britain and the United States.<sup>81</sup> By 1849, the Second Republic was concerned by the emigration of French nationals from Uruguay to Argentina—a growing issue, with one French company planning the emigration of 5,000 French citizens displaced by the 1848 revolution to Uruguay.<sup>82</sup> In 1849, even after the French blockade had been lifted, the British warned Napoleon III that it would not be indifferent to any attempt by France to annex Uruguay.<sup>83</sup> France reinforced Montevideo’s garrison in 1850, but at this point Montevideo communicated to Argentina that annexation would be preferable to French colonization.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Cady (1929), p. 203.

<sup>79</sup> Colonia do Sacramento was another fortified port town, like Montevideo, and had formerly been a Portuguese base. It is located closer to the mouth of the Plate river, and directly across from Buenos Aires, making it a strategic location. Cady (1929), pp. 58, 161, 226–228.

<sup>80</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 278.

<sup>81</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 233, 254, 259.

<sup>82</sup> Cady (1929), p. 251.

<sup>83</sup> Cady (1929), p. 251.

<sup>84</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 260, 262.

The evidence shows that, aside from conquest by Argentina, the possibility of colonization by Brazil, Britain, or France was a serious option that significantly influenced the involved actors. The defenders of Montevideo considered colonial status on several occasions as a way of guaranteeing their security. And as Britain and France's joint intervention began to fall apart, the uncertainty that France then faced about its role and interests in Uruguay prompted their government to consider colonization as an option for resolving the war. However, potential great power conflicts between Britain, France, and the United States ended up preventing recolonization of Uruguay.

#### **Monroe Doctrine as the new state regime**

The theory expects that new states will be perceived as objects of political contestation by external powers, and that the number of great powers will affect the type of regime promulgated to manage the international politics of managing new states. The new state regime should shape both the possibilities for intervention and the type of termination possible in an internal war. Multipolarity is characterized by an incentive toward formal imperialism in the peripheries as a way of overcoming the uncertainty of internal wars in which the valence of outcomes is unclear, the freedom of maneuver possessed by factions is high, and ideology is not necessarily an effective signal of alignment. Knowing that this incentive exists, the new state regime is one of exclusion. The Uruguayan civil war allows us to examine whether the Monroe Doctrine had any practical effect on the calculus of states deciding to intervene or deciding how to settle the conflict.

During the French and British interventions in Río de la Plata, the United States seemingly ought to have been concerned about the violation of the Monroe Doctrine, promulgated in 1823 to warn Europeans off any attempts to reestablish colonial rule in the



Western Hemisphere. But despite the attempts of Rosas, Uruguay, Brazil and even its own diplomats, the U.S. government was steadfast in its refusal to involve itself beyond moral support—in 1846 Secretary of State Buchanan communicated, “We cordially wish the Argentine Republic success in its struggle against foreign interference.”<sup>85</sup> In practice, the Monroe Doctrine did not achieve its present understanding and was not referred to as a “doctrine” by U.S. diplomats until the 1920s.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, Monroe’s attempt at exclusion shaped how actors calculated the stakes of intervention.

The Polk administration, despite the rhetorical commitment of the United States to “Monroe’s message,” maintained a strict policy of non-interference with regards to the Uruguayan civil war and the joint British and French intervention into the war. Not only did the United States not have intrinsic interests in Río de la Plata trade, it was more concerned about deflecting conflict with the British and the French in North America. Uruguay’s small size, agricultural economy, and distance from the United States meant that the U.S. did not develop a major economic or financial stake there.<sup>87</sup> Instead, the United States was pursuing Manifest Destiny in Texas, Oregon, and California while avoiding entanglement in South America.<sup>88</sup> The only interest the U.S. expressed (unbacked by threat of force) was a desire to bypass British and French blockades, and for shipping rights in Argentina equal to the British.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 250.

<sup>86</sup> Dent (1999), p. 351.

<sup>87</sup> Dent (1999), pp. 20–21, 350.

<sup>88</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 18, 187.

<sup>89</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 58–61, 161–164.

Rosas was unable to convince President Polk that British and French intervention was a threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere and to the principle of non-intervention.<sup>90</sup> Early on Senator Henry Clay had rebuffed Argentine attempts to invoke the Monroe Doctrine arguing that it was not a pledge.<sup>91</sup> The U.S. government ignored France's 1838–1840 blockade against Argentina, because it did not see its interests as affected if Rosas were overthrown (although the U.S. ambassador in Brazil declared the intervention illegal without a declaration of war, and the U.S. naval commander attempted an unauthorized mediation between France and Rosas).<sup>92</sup> U.S. agents in Río de la Plata, whether diplomatic or military, almost uniformly exceeded their authorization in advocating for Rivera, against Rosas, and against the Franco-British blockade's effects on U.S. ships. In each case, Washington disavowed their actions, instructed them to maintain neutrality, and to submit to the blockades.<sup>93</sup> For example, the U.S. Chargé William Brent leaked a letter in 1845 alleging that British and French efforts in Río de la Plata were an attempt to gain a foothold, and trying to establish their rule as they had in India, Barbary, Greece, and China.<sup>94</sup> Brent exceeded his instructions in attempting to undermine European justifications for maintaining their blockades, working to keep Brazil from intervening, advising Paraguay and Corrientes from accepting French or British guarantees of independence in exchange for commercial treaties, negotiating with an Argentinian general to secure Argentine concessions over river navigation if it would prevent European domination of the rivers, working against an alliance between Rosas, Paraguay, and

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<sup>90</sup> Dent (1999), p. 22; Cady (1929), p. 261.

<sup>91</sup> Cady (1929), p. 20.

<sup>92</sup> Cady (1929), p. 57–61.

<sup>93</sup> Cady (1929), Chapter VI and pp. 180, 270.

<sup>94</sup> Cady (1929), p. 165.

Corrientes, and even scolding Rosas for quarreling with Paraguay and Brazil when he ought to be uniting against the Europeans.<sup>95</sup> Brent even against any alliance with Brazil that would threaten river navigation, fearing that such agreements would legitimize arbitrary European intervention and that the cause of republicanism in the Americas would thereby be lost.<sup>96</sup>

However, Polk publicly stated in 1845 that the Monroe Doctrine was in principle limited to North America, a formulation that was aimed at the conflict with Britain over Oregon and the Pacific coast. The Paraná expedition occurred at a time when war with Britain over Oregon seemed imminent and navigation of the St. Lawrence River was a contested issue; Polk taking a stance of non-interference in Río de la Plata made it harder for Britain to diplomatically oppose U.S. action in Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico. Polk's neutrality was a willing sacrifice of U.S. standing in Argentina and Latin America, but he gained the respect of Europeans in doing so.<sup>97</sup> The conflict between the United States' parochial interests and Britain and France's interests in North America played a major role in preventing the Polk administration from being more assertive in opposition to the intervention in Río de la Plata. But, the potential for United States action against British or French interests elsewhere did affect their behavior in Uruguay.

The U.S. public was upset that Monroe's words were apparently a dead letter, editorials were published worrying that the British would turn Argentina into a vassal or colony, and the Democrats in opposition used this as an opportunity to attack the Polk administration.<sup>98</sup> Polk finally issued a message in 1845 paying lip service to Monroe's words, but limited the

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<sup>95</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 169–174, 178.

<sup>96</sup> Cady (1929), p. 168–172.

<sup>97</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 185–187, 192.

<sup>98</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 182–183.

application of the principle of non-intervention to the Northern Hemisphere. In 1846, Secretary of State James Buchanan wrote in a memo that Britain had “flagrantly violated” the Monroe Doctrine, but existing circumstances rendered it impossible for the U.S. to participate.<sup>99</sup> The administration knew that it could not practically intervene, that the European intervention was encountering difficulties in any case, and that the U.S. needed to focus on Texas, New Mexico, Oregon, and California where it was running the risk of war with Britain and France. When some senators issued a stronger worded resolution, Sen. James C. Calhoun argued that his firsthand experience with Monroe led him to understand that the doctrine was a specific principle not a more general rule (John Adams had proposed a more general rule, but his version was rejected). Polk’s policy of non-intervention was maintained for the remainder of the Uruguayan civil war although U.S. diplomats continued to deliver protests.<sup>100</sup> Even the prospect of a French armed expedition did not arouse protest or even much mention in the U.S. press.<sup>101</sup>

If the United States would not make an issue of European interference, Rosas employed it frequently in his negotiations with Britain and France. Before their intervention he consciously imitated the earlier words of President Tyler in 1843, declaring that America must be kept free from European influence.<sup>102</sup> His counterproposals to the French and British typically included their renunciation of all rights to interfere in Río de la Plata and all pretense of guaranteeing the sovereignty of the republics there, justified by the principle of American

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<sup>99</sup> Dent (1999), p. 351.

<sup>100</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 185–191, 222–223.

<sup>101</sup> Cady (1929), p. 229.

<sup>102</sup> Cady (1929), p. 115.

exception to European interference.<sup>103</sup> In 1847 the French parliament explicitly rejected Rosas' "American system" stating that this was a euphemism for the expulsion of Europe and the French from Río de la Plata.<sup>104</sup> John Cady argues that Rosas' contributions to the establishment of the American doctrine in Río de la Plata were certainly more significant than the indifference of the U.S. government, although the U.S. diplomats acting beyond their instructions also played a role.<sup>105</sup>

As the theory expects, the Monroe Doctrine regime of exclusion did have an effect on the Uruguayan civil war, especially on the French choice of whether to intervene more forcefully or even formally colonize Uruguay. The regime had an effect, despite the United States' very open denial of any obligation to enforce the regime.

### *OMNIBALANCING*

Finally, the theory expects that new "weak" states will not be especially prone to internal war; rather, the unique behavior that they exhibit is a tendency to bandwagon with threatening external powers in order to balance against domestic challenges to their security.<sup>106</sup> Both Montevideo and Rosas at times reached out to countries that had recently threatened their security or sovereignty in order to gain their support.

The Colorados in Uruguay allied against the Blancos both with the French, despite the possibility of French colonization, and with the Brazilians despite having previously been annexed by Brazil. Likewise, Rosas made great efforts to court the British (thereby dividing them from the French) despite their intervention against him, the British liberal congruence

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<sup>103</sup> Ferns (1960), p. 278; Cady (1929), p. 154, 219, 237–238.

<sup>104</sup> Cady (1929), p. 235.

<sup>105</sup> Cady (1929), pp. 266, 269–270.

<sup>106</sup> David (1991a), pp. 6–7, 14; and, David (1991b).

with his enemies, and the prior British seizure of the Falkland Islands. During the 1838–1840 French intervention, Rosas put his anger over the seizure of the Falklands into abeyance in order to court the British, emphasizing that the French blockade was an attack on Britain’s privileged position and Rosas’ overthrow would be an injury to a friendly party.<sup>107</sup> By 1842, Rosas likewise dropped his resentment over the U.S. role in the seizure of the Falklands in order to court President Tyler’s intercession.<sup>108</sup>

### *SUMMARY*

The effect of multipolarity on the politics of sovereignty is made clear in the case of the Uruguayan civil war. Rivera and Rosas were engaged in state-building projects that were both a continuation of the post-decolonization alignments among the political entities of Río de la Plata. This case study provides a strong warrant to reject the study of internal wars in isolation from their international context, and to reject the potentially misleading overcategorization of wars as strictly intrastate or extrastate, especially during the era of European colonialism. Both Rivera and Rosas played a delicate balancing game, negotiating internal threats, transnational threats, and the possibility of recolonization by a European power. Internal factions at different times perceived the possibility of recolonization as either a threat or as a possible escape from internal turmoil. External powers intervening into Uruguay also played a balancing game, deliberately holding back lest a decisive armed intervention leave them responsible for the governance of Uruguay, making sure that their actions did not provoke an unwanted response from a rival great power, while remaining cognizant that establishing a formal imperial relationship would resolve the question of Uruguay’s ultimate alignment.

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<sup>107</sup> Cady (1929), p. 63.

<sup>108</sup> Cady (1929), p. 161.

## Conclusions

The Uruguayan civil war gives strong support to the patterns predicted by theory. Multipolarity structures not only the interests of the external powers weighing intervention, but also the ability of internal factions to negotiate support. Britain and France did have economic interests in Río de la Plata, but they did not drive the decision to intervene. In multipolarity, external balancing (engaging in alliances) is the predominant form of balancing, whereas in bipolarity internal balancing (military buildup) is more effective. Thus the pressing need maintain great power alliances during this period drove Britain and France to find a project to cooperate on—this is how the relatively minor conflict in Uruguay became the object of international politics.

This case study deviates from the theory's expectations because the intervention did not produce a short conflict. The mode of intervention was not decisive, but simply a naval blockade, which served to lengthen the war, because neither intervening party had a clear objective other than to cooperate with the other great power. Otherwise, the intervention did meet expectations: it was a multilateral intervention with all the great powers intervening on the same side in support of the state against the rebels. I do not believe that the duration difference is enough to falsify the theory's expectations. The character of the civil war was still principally being shaped by the politics between great powers, on the basis of interests wholly external to the Uruguayan civil war. That the Franco-British *entente*-building project manufactured by their foreign ministers produced only a limited intervention is an exceptional scenario, but one which I hope proves the broader rule.

Multipolarity also structures the way in which ideology matters when considering the role of international politics in internal wars. Ideology was important regionally and

transnationally in affecting alliance formation among the various factions in Uruguay and neighboring countries. But ideology was not important in affecting the motivation of great powers to intervene, their willingness to maintain the intervention for ideological objectives, their willingness to support ideologically-like factions, or in harmonizing the interests of ideologically-like great powers. Britain, France, and the United States were all liberal or republican states, but disagreed fundamentally on whether intervention was appropriate, which internal factions to support, and what goals ought to be achieved before abandoning intervention. Within multipolarity, ideology is not an effective signaling strategy, either of foreign policy objectives or of factional alignment with external powers.

Finally, Uruguay demonstrates the effect of multipolarity in creating a proclivity toward the formalization of core-periphery relationships. Recolonization was a viable option as perceived both by internal factions and by external powers seeking to overcome persistent internal conflict. The politics of newly decolonized states and state-building projects increased the uncertainty that great powers faced when intervening. The case of Uruguay gives strong support for the theory's contention that intra-state and extra-state conflicts should be viewed in terms of continuity rather than as wholly separate phenomena. The evidence of the decision-making concerns of the parties to the Uruguayan civil war—clearly understanding their options and constraints in terms of the balance of power—indicates that the broader patterns found in the quantitative data are likely being generated by the causal processes predicted by the theory.



# **The Superpowers in Oz: The Laotian Civil War, 1959–1975**

## ***CHAPTER FIVE***

The 1959–1975 Laotian civil war is a case of internal war occurring during the bipolar period. The historical evidence we have of this conflict can be congruent with or falsify a number the theory's hypotheses regarding the structuring effect of bipolarity. Like the other cases studies, the Laotian civil war was selected so that the independent variables – interests, ideology, and sovereignty – would be comparable across cases. This means that each independent variable had to feature intermediate magnitudes: great power extrinsic but not intrinsic interests in the outcome of the conflict; internal factions that appeal for external support; limited interventions; an ideological aspect; decolonization or recolonization as a salient issue; and, international political deliberation regarding the politics of newly created states. We expect to see bipolarity constrain the actions of internal and external actors such that there is a structural proclivity toward continuing counterintervention to lengthen the civil war, even though the great powers are conscious that Laos has limited value. Further, we expect that ideology will play a much more salient role in linking internal factions to intervening

powers, thereby limiting their freedom of maneuver, and becoming more intensely ideological over the course of the war. And finally, we expect that the Laotian civil war will exhibit continuity with conflicts arising out of decolonization, will feature the fear of recolonization as a pressing issue despite alliances with threatening external powers, and will be governed by a more intrusive international regime for managing new state creation. Overall, examination of the historical record confirms the outcomes expected, and displays the conscious consideration of bipolarity by key actors in their decision-making.

The Laotian civil war features counterinterventions by the United States and Soviet Union (among other intervening countries), limited by their fears of escalation and by the international political commitments both superpowers made to Laotian neutrality. Both supplied aid, materiel, organizational assistance, logistics, intelligence, and political cover, and in the case of the U.S. a substantial degree of air support. The civil war featured an ideological division between a communist faction and a rightwing royalist faction. Uniquely, this case also features a neutralist faction, which allows us to demonstrate more clearly the role of ideology in binding internal factions to external powers, and the increasing ideological polarization as civil wars went on during bipolarity. And, Laos along with Vietnam and Cambodia were states created by French decolonization of Indochina, and all three were made the objects of international contestation before their state-building projects could even begin. As such, many of the roots of the Laotian civil war and its relationship with the Vietnam War lie in their post-colonial status, and in the fear of neo-colonialism, absorption, or annexation.

This chapter begins with a summary of the basic timeline and events of the Laotian civil war, and a brief note regarding the related regional conflicts and the broader global context.

The analysis then follows in three parts:

Part One examines the effect of bipolarity on the actors' interests and the stakes they perceived when weighing intervention. The theory expects that external powers weighing an

intervention will be driven more by their

extrinsic interests in the outcome of the conflict

than by any intrinsic value that the country has

for them. In this case, both the United States

and Soviet Union openly and mutually admitted

that Laos was unimportant and held no intrinsic

value for either. Nevertheless, they perceived

significant stakes in the outcome of the Laotian

civil war because of what knock-on effects it might have for their alliances. Despite the need for

core stability in bipolarity, heightened by the threat of nuclear escalation following the Cuban

Missile Crisis, the logic of bipolarity resulted in continued and escalating counterintervention.

The Laotian civil war was sustained by outside powers even when it had become wholly

ancillary to the Vietnam War, and was not allowed to resolve until the Vietnam War was also

brought to a close.

Part Two examines the effect of bipolarity on transnational political ideology. Unlike multipolarity where a faction's ideological affiliation could link it to multiple competing great powers, within bipolarity ideology serves as a Manichean choice, once made difficult to alter in

**Expectations for Bipolarity**

System	
Conflict inherent	High
Core complexity	Low
Valence of events	Clear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	Medium
Periphery relationship	Instability export
Intervention type	Counterintervention
Duration	Longer
Termination type	Military
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Effective
Ideology and duration	Longer
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Informal
New state regime	Neutralization

order to maneuver for support. The effect of ideology should be magnified within bipolarity, whereas it is mitigated or absent in other distributions of power. During the Laotian civil war, there was a sharp division between the communist Pathēt Lao and the rightwing royalist and military factions. In addition, there was a neutralist faction caught between them attempting to hold the center. These ideological divisions were from the very beginning defined by their regional and international affiliations: the Pathēt Lao seeking support from North Vietnam, the USSR, and China; the rightwing royalists and military seeking support from Thailand and the United States; and, the neutralist faction casting back and forth between the French, the USSR, and the United States at different times. The theory expects that freedom of maneuver will be more restricted within bipolarity as compared to multipolarity, and that the magnified effect of ideology will play a role in restricting the ability to seek support from external powers that do not share a faction's ideology. The theory also expects that internal wars within bipolarity, if they include an ideological factor, will become increasingly ideologized over the course of the conflict. The Laotian civil war allows us to confirm these expectations by looking at the neutralist faction, in its broader ability to maneuver, but also in its lack of support and eventual collapse.

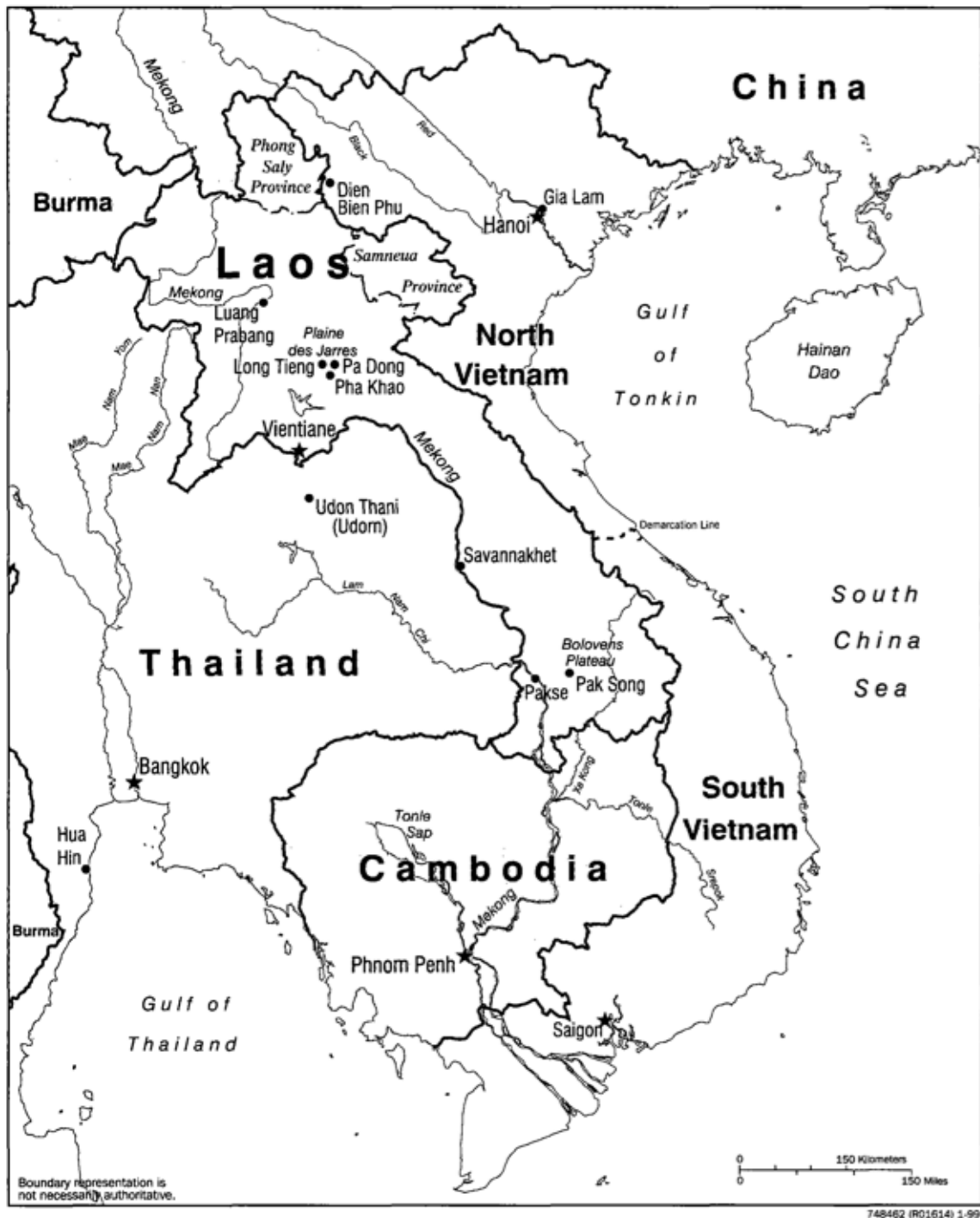
Part Three examines the effect of bipolarity on the institution of sovereignty.

Bipolarity is a transitional period for sovereignty: there are some attempts by European colonial powers to reassert their imperial sovereignty, but the anti-colonial superpowers frustrate the re-imposition of colonial rule in favor of the informal imperial spheres of influence in the peripheries. Whereas the first wave of decolonization in the New World was not the result of a sea change in the institution of sovereignty, the second larger wave of decolonization saw the

elimination of formal empire and the transition of almost all territories to the sovereign nation-state form. Despite the retreat of formal imperialism, fears of annexation, absorption, and neo-colonialism play a significant role in the internal and international politics of weak states undergoing civil war, both sharpening internal grievances and justifying counterintervention. Because bipolarity makes informal imperialism feasible through ideological affiliation with partisans, the regime for managing newly created states changes from exclusion (i.e. the Monroe Doctrine) to neutralization, in an attempt to remove new states as objects of international political contestation. The attempt to maintain a fig leaf of neutralization pushes external powers toward limited modes of intervention.

Finally, the conclusion recapitulates the theory's expectations for internal wars occurring within bipolarity, and summarizes the degree to which the historical record of the Laotian civil war is congruent with those expectations.

## PRE-1975 INDOCHINA



Map of Indochina from: Leary, William M. "CIA Air Operations in Laos, 1955–1974." *Journal of Military History* 53 (1995), p. 74.

## Overview of the Laotian Civil War

The Laotian civil war began as a conflict between the communist Pathēt Lao and anti-communist Laotian generals in the wake of decolonization. The Pathēt Lao occupied two Laotian provinces following the Indochinese independence struggle spearheaded by the North Vietnamese general Võ Nguyên Giáp. When it became apparent that the Pathēt Lao would not hold elections in their provinces, would only conditionally participate in a coalition government, would not integrate their military forces in the Royal Lao Army, and would not force the exit of foreign Vietnamese troops from their territories, rightwing military and royalist factions began to crack down on the Pathēt Lao. The resulting civil war was fought not only between the communists and royalists, but embroiled the neutralists, North Vietnam, Thailand, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China among others. Additionally, leaders of the different factions were all members of the same royal family.

### Family & Faction<sup>1</sup>



**King Sisavāngvong**

Father of Savāngvatthanā, Suvanna, Phetxarāt, Bunūm, and Suphānuvong



**Crown Prince Savāngvatthanā**

Son of Sisavāngvong, cousin of Suvanna, Phetxarāt, Bunūm, and Suphānuvong



**Prince Phetxarāt Rattavongsā**

Lao Issara Prime Minister

Brother of Suvanna & Bunūm, half-brother of Suphānuvong



**Prince Suvanna Phūmā**

Neutralist Prime Minister

Brother of Phetxarāt & Bunūm, half-brother of Suphānuvong

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<sup>1</sup> A note on spelling: I have adopted Martin Stuart-Fox's romanization of Laotian names, which diverges from the conventionally accepted spellings. See Stuart-Fox (1997).

The arc of the conflict can be divided into five phases:

### *INDEPENDENCE & THE 1954 GENEVA CONFERENCE*

From World War II through the 1954 Geneva Conference, multiple internal and external actors contested the colonial status of Laos. Laotian factions were divided by their desired goal, whether full independence, remaining part of the French Union, or open to the possibility of joining an Indochinese federation. Factions were also defined by their external alliance partner, a choice that reflected their co-ideological affiliation—neutralists aligned with France, the rightwing aligned with Thailand and the United States, and the communists aligned with North Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and China. The 1949 General Convention agreed to by France and Laos gave the colony internal autonomy while France would remain responsible for its defense and foreign relations. Factions on both the right and left continued to struggle for independence from bases in Thailand and in concert with the North Vietnamese. General Giáp's 1953 invasion of



**Prince Suphānuvong**  
Pathēt Lao figurehead

Half-brother of Suvanna, Phetxarāt & Bunūm



**Prince Bunūm**  
Rightwing Prime Minister

Brother of Suvanna & Phetxarāt, half-brother of Suphānuvong



**General Phūmī Nôsavan**  
Rightwing General  
Cousin once-removed of Sarit



**Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat**  
Rightwing Thai Dictator  
Cousin once-removed of Phūmī

Images courtesy of Wikipedia or Wikimedia Commons, except: Bunūm image courtesy of Dutch National Archives (ANEFO); and, Phūmī Nôsavan image unsourced (fair use).



Laos triggered France's obligation to defend Laos, but their garrison at Điện Biên Phủ was defeated on the eve of the 1954 Geneva Conference. The conference was an attempt by the superpowers to neutralize Laos, thereby removing it from international contention. The resulting agreement set the terms of Laotian independence and neutrality—withdrawal of foreign forces and bases, no foreign introduction of weapons, Lao commitment to refrain from aggressive war and from joining military alliances, and the granting of two provinces to the Pathēt Lao for regroupment before demobilization—but, this agreement also contained within it the seeds of the subsequent civil war, the principles that would limit overt modes of intervention by external powers, and the template by which later attempts at re-neutralization would be cast.

Thus the period leading up to the civil war provides historical evidence that will allow us to test the effects of bipolarity on faction and superpower interests, the manner in which ideology linked internal factions to external powers, the continuity between colonial conflicts and internal wars, and the regime for managing newly created states.

### *THE FIRST COALITION, COUPS & CIVIL WAR*

Despite the attempt of the 1954 Geneva Conference to neutralize Laos, both superpowers immediately found their interests bound up in the domestic political outcome of the newly independence country's attempt to form a government. The United States believed that Laos would be important to containing the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia, and saw its credibility as an alliance leader and provider of security at stake. The Soviet Union faced a challenge for leadership of the communist world from the People's Republic of China following Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalinism and announcing 'peaceful coexistence.' The practical manifestation of their power struggle and doctrinal disputes was

manifested in Indochina, and the degree to which the USSR or PRC would sponsor more intense revolutionary anti-imperialist warfare. It was within this context that the First Coalition government of Laos was negotiated and agreed to in 1957. The government would be led by neutralists, but include two cabinet members from the rightwing faction and two cabinet members from the Pathēt Lao. The two Pathēt Lao provinces and the Pathēt Lao military forces were to be reintegrated. The United States provided Laos with an extremely generous but poorly distributed and highly corrupting aid program, resulting in a strong showing for communists in 1958 elections. There was a near coup in 1959 by the military, followed by a rightwing rigged election in 1960 that resulted in no seats for Pathēt Lao or leftwing candidates. The result was a surprise coup led by a young paratrooper, Kōnglae, who demanded a return to a neutralist government. The U.S. supported the rightwing generals, while the USSR and Pathēt Lao declared their support for the neutralists. The civil war then began in earnest between the U.S. supplied military and the neutralists supplied by Soviet airlift.

The onset of the Laotian civil war following the collapse of the First Coalition provides a great deal of evidence against which to test the theory's expectations. Bipolarity should shape the extrinsic interests of the superpowers in the outcome of internal conflicts, and inform their decisions to intervene. Bipolarity should also shape the significance of ideology, as the superpowers impose ideological interpretations on events, and as the partisan polarization of the internal war begins to undermine attempts at moderation. Finally, bipolarity should change the viability of informal imperialism, and heighten fears of neo-colonialism as part of factional grievances.

### *THE 1962 GENEVA CONFERENCE*

The 1962 Geneva Conference is the central moment in defining the course and character of the Laotian civil war. The agreement reached was an attempt to cut off further escalation of the Laotian civil war and reestablish the country's neutrality. The alliance leadership dynamics and threat of counterintervention remained central to the deliberations of internal and external parties to the conflict. Khrushchev and Mao jockeyed for influence within the communist world, and more specifically with Hồ Chí Minh. The Kennedy administration weighed its options for a political solution or a military solution in Indochina relative to the tenuous support they expected from SEATO, and the possibility of counterintervention. Both Khrushchev and Kennedy agreed that Laos was not worth their involvement, that the government should be neutral, and that it should be chosen by Laotians rather than imposed from without. Adding to their mutual reticence to risk escalation, the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis had brought the superpowers far closer to a nuclear exchange than either leader was willing to gamble on again.

The superpowers jointly put pressure on all the involved parties to agree to a ceasefire and attend the negotiations in Geneva. The result was similar the 1954 Geneva Conference agreement: a neutralist led government; four cabinet positions for the rightwing, four for the Pathēt Lao; a commitment to reject any military alliance, foreign interference in its internal affairs, and foreign troops on its territory. Sticking to the letter of this agreement defined the modes of intervention on both sides. The USSR would no longer directly arm Laotian factions as they had during the airlift, but would now send arms through the North Vietnamese. The United States would eventually support the Royal Lao Government, but increasingly focus its

support through proxies – Kônglae’s neutralists, Vang Pao’s Hmong secret army, Thai airforce and paramilitary units – and covert action by the CIA.

The record of the 1962 Geneva Conference allows us to test how bipolarity structured the interests of the superpowers, their alliance partners, and the internal factions seeking support. Further, it allows us to test the manner in which bipolarity interacted with ideology, especially in the desire for Laotian neutrality. And finally, it gives evidence that can be tested against the theory’s expectations for the new state regime of neutralization as an attempt to remove newly created states from international contestation.

### *THE SECOND COALITION & CIVIL WAR*

The bulk of the Laotian civil war was fought from 1962–1973, as the Second Coalition that emerged from the 1962 Geneva Conference broke down quickly. Once the agreement was signed, the USSR ceased support for the neutralists and began channeling all of its assistance to the Pathēt Lao through North Vietnam. The United States was still funding the rightwing generals and Vang Pao’s Hmong irregulars. Neutralist Prime Minister Suvanna Phūmā and Kônglae were forced to appeal to the United States as well, but this switch from Soviet to American support caused a split within the neutralist ranks, with the “Patriotic Neutralists” leaving to align with the Pathēt Lao. From that point on, the civil war mainly proceeded in two theaters: the strategically located Plain of Jars; and, the Ho Chi Minh trail. As it became clear that fighting over the Plain of Jars had become a seasonal stalemate—the Pathēt Lao making gains in the dry season, the Hmong Secret Army making gains in the wet season—the main focus of external powers became the Ho Chi Minh trail, which was rising in importance as the Vietnam War escalated. Following Kennedy’s assassination, the Johnson administration increased the use of covert troops, including the Hmong irregulars, and ramped up U.S. air

support. After a near coup, Suvanna merged the neutralist forces and rightwing forces, and the Patriotic Neutralists responded by formally allying with the Pathēt Lao—the neutralists as an independent political and military entity had collapsed. After an internal power struggle, both the rightwing General Phūmī and the formerly-neutralist Kōnglae fled into exile. The Nixon administration further increased the role of U.S. airpower, while changing the role of the Secret Army from mobile irregulars to a conventional force fighting pitched battles, leading to grievous losses without much strategic gain.

The fourth phase – the Second Coalition and civil war – provides a great deal of evidence against which we can test the effect of bipolarity in structuring the extrinsic interests of intervening powers and the ability of internal factions to appeal for support. The theory's expectations regarding ideology within bipolarity can be tested against the experience of the neutralists and their ultimate subsumption by the left and the right. And, we can test whether or not the modes of intervention were affected by the new state regime of neutralization, especially given the extensive direct intervention next door in South Vietnam.

### *THE THIRD COALITION & MILITARY VICTORY*

The final phase from 1973–1975 covers the vain attempt to terminate the Laotian civil war through another negotiated neutralization, and the subsequent military conquest of the entirety of Laos by the Pathēt Lao. The end of U.S. military involvement in Laos was conditional upon a Vietnamese ceasefire agreement between Henry Kissinger and Lê Đức Thọ—if the ceasefire in Vietnam held, Thọ promised that he would deliver a Laotian ceasefire within a month. A Third Coalition government was negotiated, U.S. and Thai military advisers left, Vang Pao's Secret Army was integrated into the Royal Lao Army, but tens of thousands of Việt Minh and PLA troops remained Laos working on the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Suvanna was the sole neutralist in the new government, with the remaining cabinet positions split equally between left and right. While Suvanna was prime minister, his half-brother Suphānuvong headed a newly created Consultative Council, representing the Pathēt Lao and giving him status equal to the prime minister. In 1975, when Vietnam and Cambodia had been won for the communist forces, the Pathēt Lao abandoned the ceasefire and conquered the Plain of Jars, while protesters in the capital Viang Chan forced out rightwing cabinet members, generals, and USAID personnel. National elections were held that included only Pathēt Lao-approved candidates, after which Suvanna and Suphānuvong presented King Savāngvatthanā a demand for abdication. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was then proclaimed.

The evidence from the fifth and final phase of the Laotian civil war allows us to test how bipolarity structures the interests of internal and external parties to the conflict, specifically focusing on the relationship of extrinsic interests, ideology, and whether a conflict features a military or negotiated termination.

## **Related Regional Conflicts and Global Context**

The Laotian civil war was fought alongside other Indochinese conflicts in Vietnam and Cambodia, and cannot be understood in isolation from regional and international politics. The Laotian civil war also serves as a case of broader significance: an example of post-decolonization conflicts throughout the Old World; of the wave of Marxist revolutions motivating and defining internal wars; and, of the attempt of the post-WWII international order to grapple with the rapid expansion of the membership of international society.

The combined effects of World War I and World War II on European great powers rendered their hold on far-flung colonies tenuous and made the resources and will necessary to

reassert colonial rule scarce. The wholesale destruction of European metropolises and Japan left the United States and the Soviet Union as the two remaining superpowers. Following WWII, European colonial powers did attempt to reassert imperial sovereignty over their colonies, but faced resistance not only from the populations of those colonies but also from the new superpowers. While Britain eventually settled on a process of decolonization that it applied to its colonies in succession, decolonization faced more recalcitrant military opposition from France and Portugal, leading to bloody wars of independence—Laos being a prime example.<sup>2</sup>

The end of European imperial sovereignty created 83 new states over the period that this study defines as bipolarity, 1944–1990. This is compared to the 55 states created during multipolarity from 1816–1943, a period nearly three times as long as bipolarity. Just as the first wave of New World decolonization created the possibility of internal wars and great power intervention into weak states, the second wave of Old World decolonization created far more opportunities compressed into a shorter period of time. The United Nations Charter enshrined territorial integrity and non-aggression as central to post-WWII sovereignty. Meant to prevent further interstate wars, in an era of Liberal–Marxist contestation this formulation revived the dynamic of *cuius regio, eius religio*, recreating the same incentive toward coup and revolution that had been so destructive to internal peace and stability during the European wars of religion.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> Abernethy (2000), Chapter 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose realm, his religion”) was coined in 1582 by legist Joachim Stephani, describing the outcome of the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, which determined the religious make-up of Germany. Ozment (1980), p. 259n13. It is worth noting that the Augsburg settlement did not solve the problem of internationalized religious civil wars. Rather, placing the religion of the people in the person of the prince created incentives both for revolt—the transcendent importance of the eternal soul taking priority over the earthly ruler—and for international intervention by states, the emperor, and the pope seeking to affect the balance between the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The 1648 Treaty of Westphalia solved this problem by allowing rulers freedom to practice as they chose while restricting their ability to force the conversion of the people under their rule. Krasner (1993), p. 242; Barkin (1998), p. 236. Contemporary scholars have compared the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle to the

1960 UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was an important affirmation of the place of colonized peoples as full members of international society, but the newly created states entered the international system with borders inherited from colonial administration, major hurdles in nation- and state-building, and few traditional means for strengthening the state and nation (e.g. inter-state war) before being riven by international political rivalry.<sup>4</sup>

The rest of the chapter proceeds in four parts. Part One assesses the structuring effect of multipolarity on the interests of internal factions and external powers weighing intervention into the Laotian civil war, focusing on extrinsic interests and counterintervention. Part Two examines whether the effect of ideology on the conflict was shaped by the ideological links between internal factions and the superpowers, and to what degree bipolarity affects ideological polarization and freedom of maneuver. Part Three discusses the effect of informal imperialism on the course of the war, first whether its status as a post-colonial state had important implications for the politics of Laos's bandwagoning behavior, and second, whether the regime established for managing new states had a constraining effect on the actors. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings and assess the degree to which the historical record is congruent with the theory's expectations.

## **Polarity and Interests**

The theory expects that bipolarity will constrain the political options open to internal factions seeking support in their civil conflict, and will shape the stakes perceived by external powers weighing intervention. Compared to multipolarity, bipolarity is simpler and clearer—

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approach of the superpowers toward their spheres of influence, intervening in order to place ideologically-like allies in control of the state. See, Vincent (1974), p. 360; and, Finnemore (2003), pp. 128–129.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson (1993).



there is only one peer competitor that must be balanced against, and all focus can be trained on the moves of the rival superpower. Determining which side stands to gain from a given event in the periphery is much surer, and there are few truly neutral outcomes within a politically integrated globe. With an intense but stable standoff between the superpowers, and with peripheral realignment more difficult, both superpowers exported instability to the peripheries, supporting revolution and counterrevolution to gain perceived political advantage. Unlike the multilateral interventions on the side of the state that were predominant within multipolarity, counterinterventions occur frequently within bipolarity. External military support leads to longer duration wars and a greater likelihood of military terminations.

The Laotian civil war provides substantial support for the theory's expectations. Counterinterventions from the United States, Soviet Union, and North Vietnam caused the collapse of the First Coalition government and descent into civil war. U.S. leadership of SEATO was at stake on one side, and the USSR's leadership of the communist block was being contested by the PRC on the other side. Neither side had intrinsic interests in Laos, but they came to see extrinsic interests in Laos due to their bloc commitments. Despite mutual recognition that they lacked intrinsic interests in Laos, and despite recognizing the very real threat that escalation posed in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the superpowers were driven by the logic of bipolarity to continue lengthening the Laotian civil war through increased support and intensifying their means of intervention. The end of the Laotian civil war came about not because of any fundamental changes to the situation within Laos, but because the United States, USSR, PRC, and Vietnam had resolved to end the Vietnam War. The

negotiation of the Third Coalition was a face-saving measure for Laos, ancillary to finding a solution for Vietnam.

Two sections follow. The first section explains the extrinsic interests of both superpowers in Laos, details how leaders on both sides saw the stakes in Laos as tied to the stability or instability of their relations, and explains what went into the termination of the Laotian civil war. The second section details the counterintervention and its self-sustaining dynamic, the role of the internal factions in escalating beyond what external powers intended, and how attempts at political resolutions were thus undermined.

### *EXTRINSIC INTERESTS & EXPORTING INSTABILITY*

The theory expects that the course of internal wars will be structured by the international system, and cannot be reduced simply to a matter of bilateral relations and foreign policy processes. The involvement of the United States and Soviet Union in Laos was almost entirely determined by their extrinsic interests in the type of domestic regime that emerged following decolonization. The stakes were determined not by any inherent interests in Laos, but in the implications that Laotian alignment had for their respective alliance blocs. As the conflict wore on, the superpower interest in the Vietnam War began to determine the importance of Laos. It was only when the Vietnam War's resolution was at hand that the Laotian civil war could be allowed to end as well.

### **Domino Theory and Peaceful Coexistence**

Following the 1954 Geneva Conference and during the run-up to the civil war, both superpowers faced difficulties in managing their position of leadership over their rival blocs. Alliance dynamics within bipolarity were substantially different than those in multipolarity or unipolarity, and the concerns of Eisenhower and Khrushchev illustrate the difficulties of

maintaining a credible position of leadership. Eisenhower clearly saw SEATO through the logic of a zero-sum balance, the threat of counterintervention, and the need to be perceived as a credible alliance partner for the smaller Southeast Asian countries. Khrushchev, even if he knew that Laos had little or no intrinsic value to the Soviet Union, felt pressure to compete with China for leadership and strategic direction of the communist bloc. Understanding the problems of heightening tensions between the two superpowers, Khrushchev was reluctant to press for further violent revolutionary wars, but at the same time could not let the USSR be outmaneuvered by a more fervently revolutionary China, and thereby lose leadership of the communist bloc.

The Eisenhower administration rejected the Geneva Accords of 1954 before the ink was dry, stating publicly that the U.S. was not “bound by the decisions taken at the conference” and that the U.S. was “actively pursuing discussions with other free nations with a view to the rapid organization of a collective defense in Southeast Asia in order to prevent further direct or indirect communist aggression.” Within two months Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles had negotiated the Manila Pact to form SEATO with Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines, along with Australia, New Zealand, France, and Britain. SEATO signatories also then pledged to defend the three Indochinese non-signatories: Laos, Cambodia, and South Vietnam.<sup>5</sup>

Eisenhower explicitly linked the defense of Indochina to the domino theory both in NSC documents and in press conferences—in this he was joined by both Dean Rusk and Walt Rostow. A 1952 NSC Statement of Policy stated, “the loss of any of the countries of Southeast Asia to communist control... in the absence of effective and timely counteraction... would probably lead

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<sup>5</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 78–79.

to relatively swift submission to or an alignment with communism by the remaining countries of this group. ...[A]n alignment with communism of the rest of Southeast Asia and India, and in the longer term, of the Middle East would in all probability progressively follow... endanger[ing] the security of Europe.” Loss of Southeast Asia would also “render the U.S. position in the Pacific offshore island chain precarious and would seriously jeopardize fundamental U.S. security interest in the Far East [Japan],” and threaten the choke point at Malacca connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Southeast Asian air bases could also then threaten Australia.<sup>6</sup>

Defense of Laos was conceived of in terms of alliance credibility and zero-sum thinking about counteracting Soviet expansionism. Following the creation of SEATO, Dean Rusk appeared on television and stated, “if our allies or, more particularly, if our adversaries should discover that the American commitment is not worth anything, then the world would face dangers of which we have not yet dreamed.” Negotiated concessions to communists were viewed through the lens of Chamberlain’s Munich appeasement of Hitler, and Eisenhower wrote in a 1954 letter to Winston Churchill, “we failed to halt Hirohito, Mussolini and Hitler by not acting in unity and time. ...There will be no appeasement this time.” At the time, the prevailing American view of communism was as an undifferentiated movement directed by the Kremlin, leading to an assumption that the insurgency in Laos – just as other insurgencies around the world – had behind it the Soviet Union. Gains made by communists would not sate their appetites but merely serve as staging grounds for the next insurgency.<sup>7</sup>

While the United States viewed Laos in terms of its interests in containing the Soviet Union and maintaining alliance credibility, the Soviet Union likewise saw Laos not just

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<sup>6</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 4, 81–83, 92–94.

<sup>7</sup> Kochavi (2002), p. 105. Verrone (2001), pp. 85–90.

through the lens of the historical revolutionary process but also as an object in their struggle to maintain leadership of the communist bloc.<sup>8</sup> For its part, the People's Republic of China also viewed the conflict in Laos through the lens of bipolarity, and Mao's position on Laos changed as the relations between the United States, USSR, and PRC changed. The shift from 'peaceful coexistence' to support for Cold War revolution was intensified by and justified through rival interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, but was driven primarily by the threat of a U.S.-USSR condominium emerging from détente. What resulted was a competitive relationship between the PRC and USSR over material support and ideological guidance in the DRV and Laos.

At the 1956 Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev formally introduced 'peaceful coexistence' as the Soviet doctrine and denounced the cult of personality surrounding Stalin. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalinism and promulgation of the 'peaceful coexistence' doctrine led Mao to re-emphasize militancy and the intensification of class struggle throughout the world. While this change would spark the beginnings of the Sino-Soviet split, it had an initially moderating effect on Indochina. Khrushchev and Hồ Chí Minh had a good relationship, and while Vietnamese leadership was beginning to tilt toward Beijing (especially so after "peaceful existence" was promulgated), Hồ ensured that Vietnam cleaved to the new doctrine. However, by 1958 Hồ withdrew from an active role in Vietnamese politics, leaving DRV strategy in the hands of successors who took greater inspiration from the PRC. In 1959, North Vietnam had replaced 'peaceful coexistence' with a national unification strategy.<sup>9</sup> By the end of 1959 – the same year that the Laotian crisis would descend into civil war – Soviet and Chinese leaders engaged in a heated debate over whether to reduce or intensify international

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<sup>8</sup> Langer (1972), p. 1. Zhang (2002), p. 1150.

<sup>9</sup> Fursenko & Naftali (2006), pp. 324–325. Langer (1972), p. 2.

tensions, anti-imperialism, and revolutionary war. Nevertheless, Mao emphasized to Kaisôn Phomivihân, when the Pathêt Lao leader visited Beijing in secret in 1959, that the Pathêt Lao ought to remain cautious and not give the West any evidence that the PRC or DRV were helping the Pathêt Lao.<sup>10</sup>

Domino theory and 'peaceful coexistence' were superpower concepts about how to define and navigate the problems they faced within bipolarity, and the two concepts were central to their ability to maintain leadership over their respective blocs. The importance of Laos was not determined by its intrinsic strategic value, rather it was identified as significant with respect to the United States' SEATO alliance and to the Soviet Union's position within the communist world relative to China. These two different concepts modeling stability or instability in relations between the superpowers and the periphery set the terms for superpower interest in Laos.

### **Sino-Soviet Split, Kennedy, Nuclear Crisis & Neutralization**

The first phase of the Laotian civil war, before the 1962 Geneva Conference, featured interventions from both the Soviet Union and the United States. Leaders on both sides thought about intervention in terms of their extrinsic interests. To outflank China, Khrushchev needed to demonstrate anti-imperialist resolve against the United States, while also seeking to manage the U.S.-Soviet relationship in such a way that escalation would not spiral out of control. The Kennedy administration reassessed Eisenhower's emphasis on the importance of Laos, viewing it through the lens of SEATO's stability, Chinese unpredictability, and the Bay of Pigs fiasco. The Berlin crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis rattled both superpowers, leading

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<sup>10</sup> While Suphānuvong was the public face and figurehead of the Pathêt Lao, Kaisôn Phomivihân was the power behind the throne and emerged following the war as the leader of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Yang (2002), pp. 16–18. Brzezinski (1967), pp. 369, 374–375. Langer (1972), p. 1.

them to attempt a political rather than military solution to Laos. In each case, the major drivers of superpower policy toward Laos were extrinsic issues of East-West balance.

The Sino-Soviet ideological split that began in 1956 had sharpened by the time the second Geneva Conference had been called for. Khrushchev's interests in Laos and Laotian neutrality were structured by the constraints of bipolarity and the need to demonstrate alliance leadership in the face of a challenge from the Chinese. In 1959, Khrushchev and Eisenhower held a summit meeting, and the USSR was eager to gain concessions from the West while also pushing for an accommodation between the U.S. and USSR. Divergence between the USSR and PRC, which had been growing since 1956–7, opened up over the developing world and the transfer of nuclear technology to the PRC. The USSR favored “a Bandung spirit” in its relations to the developing world, attempting to woo India. The USSR had taken India's side over China's in a frontier dispute and, as part of its accommodation with the West, the USSR had pushed the PRC to accept a “two-Chinas” solution to Taiwan. The result was open Chinese opposition to the USSR's “peaceful coexistence,” “peaceful revolution,” and “non-inevitability of war” slogans.<sup>11</sup>

A 1960 meeting between Chinese and North Vietnamese leadership further demonstrated the Chinese break with Soviet thinking on Indochina. Mao had earlier that year voiced concerns about Hồ Chí Minh to Kim Il-Sung, frustrated that the DRV was equivocal on the Sino-Soviet disputes, reluctant to copy the PRC's reform model, and that Hồ was attempting to play the role of mediator between the PRC and USSR. However, the freedom of maneuver enjoyed by the North Vietnamese was limited. Within multipolarity, they might have been able to profitably ally with a different great power. But within bipolarity Hồ Chí Minh perceived that

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<sup>11</sup> Brzezinski (1967), pp. 376–379, 402, 418. Zhang (2002), p. 1150.

only the USSR had the strength to stand up to the U.S. The North Vietnamese hesitated to openly align with the PRC, and feared absorption by China, instead calling for unity within the communist bloc and attempting to mediate between the PRC and USSR, which only further exasperated Mao.<sup>12</sup>

In person, Mao emphasized to Hồ his enthusiasm for the armed anti-imperialist struggle the North Vietnamese were undertaking, and that provoking violence from the reactionaries would ultimately help the cause of revolution. A 1961 conversation between Deng Xiaoping and Hồ Chí Minh, held during the run-up to the Geneva Conference, considered how much violence and where would be enough to further revolution without leading to direct intervention by American troops. Zhou Enlai suggested that beyond guerilla war North Vietnam should engage in larger-scale war in Laos and South Vietnam, but avoid bringing in or engaging with American forces. Mao's opinion on the Geneva Conference was that even if a coalition government were established, it would be a temporary respite before war inevitably broke out again. As such, North Vietnamese troops should continue fighting in Laos and the DRV should continue to pretend that it had no troops there. Mao promised that the PRC would send food and weapons to Laos through North Vietnam (aid that they would substantially increase following the introduction of "special warfare" by the Kennedy administration following Geneva). Mao's insistence on intensifying the conflicts in Indochina was driven by the Soviet Union's steps toward détente and peaceful coexistence with the U.S., and its concomitant unwillingness to carry on revolution. Later in 1962, Zhou Enlai stated at

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<sup>12</sup> Langer (1973), p. 97.



the CCP's Tenth Plenum, "The truth of Marxism-Leninism and the center of the world revolution has moved from Moscow to Beijing."<sup>13</sup>

The possibility of stabilizing relations between the two superpowers shaped how both China and North Vietnam saw their interests in Laos. China feared a superpower condominium and therefore pushed for increased conflict in Indochina. North Vietnam also had a vital interest in continuing the struggle in Laos, but remained unwilling to abandon the Soviet Union, because they perceived China as being incapable of balancing the United States. The Kennedy administration likewise preferred to find a solution with the USSR, because they viewed Chinese leadership as irrational, whereas the Soviets had a comparatively realistic understanding of the dangers of escalation.

The Kennedy administration took office faced immediately with the crisis in Laos, with substantial gains being made by the Pathēt Lao and Kônglae supplied by Soviet airlift. By the end of December 1960, the Soviet airlift of artillery and materiel, (and even transporting Kônglae and his troops from Vang Vieng to the Plain of Jars) allowed the neutralist forces augmented by North Vietnamese troops to retake the gains made by Phūmī. By May 1961, the Kennedy administration estimated that the Soviets had flown over 1,000 sorties to supply the neutralists and Pathēt Lao.<sup>14</sup> Kennedy reassessed and broke with Eisenhower's understanding of the strategic value of Laos. Whereas Eisenhower and SEATO planned on defending Thailand and Southeast Asia by holding the Mekong River, Kennedy saw Laos as being a disadvantageous position from which to make a stand, instead favoring South Vietnam. Geographical factors made Laos especially problematic, and because it bordered the PRC,

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<sup>13</sup> Kochavi (2002), p. 133. Yang (2002), pp. 18–23. Brzezinski (1967), pp. 378–379. Langer (1973), p. 93.

<sup>14</sup> Langer (1972), p. 55.

intervention in Laos threatened to provoke another land war with China. On the other hand, South Vietnam had a coherent nation, armed forces that were larger and better trained than the spineless Royal Lao Army, coastal frontage that allowed for U.S. air and sea power to be brought directly to bear on the conflict, and no border shared with China.<sup>15</sup>

Kennedy was further sobered by the reticence of SEATO allies Britain and France to endorse current U.S. policy in Laos much less an escalation. Secretary of State Dean Rusk was able to secure SEATO troop commitments from Thailand, Pakistan, and the Philippines, but could not overcome French opposition. On the other hand, Vice President Johnson wrote a May 1961 memo to Kennedy following a tour of Asia, stressing the effect that Laos policy would have on U.S. regional allies. “Laos has created doubt and concern about intentions of the United States throughout south-east Asia. No amount of success at Geneva can, of itself, erase this... Leaders such as Diem [South Vietnam], Chiang [Taiwan], Sarit [Thailand], and Ayub [Pakistan] more or less accept that we are making ‘the best of a bad bargain’ at Geneva. Their charity extends no farther.”<sup>16</sup>

The Kennedy administration’s view of China played a significant role in their policy toward Indochina and their desire to work with the comparatively more rational and civilized Soviet Union to diffuse the Laotian crisis. Likewise, the Soviet Union aimed to demonstrate leadership over the Chinese during their contest for the hearts and minds of Third World

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<sup>15</sup> The human geography of Laos rendered Laotians with little sense of nationality, given that their national territory was a somewhat arbitrary French administrative region that grouped together differing ethnic groups with no affective ties and histories of discrimination. Laos was landlocked and accessible principally by the Mekong River, which could not carry troop transport or battleships. Supply lines from Thai ports were forbiddingly long. And, the Mekong itself was an extremely long front to defend. Kochavi (2002), p. 103. Verrone (2001), pp. 34–35, 108–110. Warner (1994), pp. 687, 689. Usowski (1991), p. 380. Vehnekamp (2009), p. 70. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 147.

<sup>16</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 352. Warner (1994), pp. 687, 691, 695. Vehnekamp (2009), p. 49. White (1999).

revolutionaries and communist bloc countries. The Kennedy administration viewed Chinese leadership as irresponsible, unpredictable, indifferent to the horrors of nuclear war, pursuing an expansionist policy throughout Asia (as evidenced primarily by the Korean War), spreading Mao's doctrine of peasant revolution and guerilla warfare, and attracting non-aligned countries and national liberation movements.<sup>17</sup>

The day after the end of the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy told Richard Nixon, "I just don't think we ought to get involved [in Laos] ...particularly where we might find ourselves fighting millions of Chinese troops in jungles. In any event, I don't see how we can make any move in Laos, which is thousands of miles away, if we don't make a move in Cuba, which is only ninety miles away." A subsequent memo to Kennedy from Defense Secretary McNamara admitted that an intervention scenario might not lead to a ceasefire but instead result in massive support for the Pathēt Lao from North Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union, in which case, "we must promptly counter each added element brought against our forces with a more than compensating increment from our side. If the Pathet Lao keep coming, we must take any military action required to meet the threat. If North Viet-Nam attacks, we must strike North Viet-Nam. If Chinese volunteers intervene, we will have to go after South China."<sup>18</sup> But, Kennedy concluded that neutralization was acceptable, and Dean Rusk would later change his pro-intervention position to support neutralization in the face of the threat of Chinese escalation. Because a Chinese intervention was considered likely by most outside military and

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<sup>17</sup> Historian Noam Kochavi assesses Kennedy's pessimistic view of Chinese expansionism: "[I]n this respect, Kennedy personified a decision maker so wedded to a zero-sum perspective and so obsessed with the objective of deterrence as to overlook the 'security dilemma.' Namely, he failed to appreciate the degree to which his deterrence policies may have acquired the nature of a self-fulfilling mechanism, stoking apprehension and hostility on the Chinese side and thus contributing to an escalatory spiral." Kochavi (2002), pp. 95–101, 129–131. Zhang (2002), p. 1150. Langer (1973), p. 92.

<sup>18</sup> Warner (1994), pp. 687–691.

intelligence experts, Kennedy believed that neutralization would be a better strategy than escalation with China, and it was General MacArthur who advised him that, “it would be a mistake to fight in Laos,” because of the advantages that China would have there.<sup>19</sup>

The 1961 Vienna summit between Kennedy and Khrushchev was principally focused on disarmament, international tensions, and a German Peace Treaty and the Berlin crisis. Laos was on the agenda but treated as a minor issue. Neither side was able to agree to a ceasefire once finger-pointing began over the presence of Việt Minh and Thai troops operating within Laos. But they did not see lack of a resolution as a failure at that time, with both leaders agreeing, “Laos is not so important as to get us as involved as we are.”<sup>20</sup>

The period of 1960–1962, leading up to and encompassing the 1962 Geneva Conference, was a highpoint for Soviet international assertiveness. They perceived themselves as catching up and even exceeding the United States economically, in the space race, in some weapons technologies, and in achieving a rough nuclear parity. The USSR was seeing successes in supporting movements around the world—Laos, Cuba, Guinea, Congo—while the United States was faltering. However, the Cuban Missile Crisis marked a decisive shift by the USSR toward a more cautious foreign policy and a withdrawal from adventurism around the world, and Soviet focus on détente buying time for internal economic buildup was redoubled.<sup>21</sup> While

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<sup>19</sup> The majority of Kennedy’s close advisors supported an intervention, and not a limited intervention but one with escalatory measures up to a nuclear attack on Hanoi and Beijing. Walt Rostow, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Lemnitzer, Army Chief of Staff General Decker, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke, Dean Rusk, and Robert McNamara all voiced support for intervention. For many of his advisors, and principally Rostow, China’s economic problems following the Great Leap Forward gave the U.S. greater ability to act without a Chinese response: “The Chinese [domestic] situation should strengthen our will to pursue a policy which would deny South Vietnam, Thailand – and Laos too – to the Communists over the indefinite future.” Kochavi (2002), pp. 105–109, 118. Usowski (1991), p. 380.

<sup>20</sup> Whitefield (2007), pp. 74–75, 84–85. Usowski (1991), p. 397. Langer (1973), p. 67. Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 50–51. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 109.

<sup>21</sup> Brzezinski (1967), pp. 399–402, 413, 422.

the Berlin Crisis of 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 led the North Vietnamese (and China) to believe that the USSR was returning to a policy of confrontation with the West, one consequence of the nuclear crisis was that the USSR limited its military aid to North Vietnam. Despite fearing that a Sino-Soviet rift would endanger the DRV's ability to stand up to the U.S., the North Vietnamese began to tilt toward the PRC beginning in 1963.<sup>22</sup>

Soviet opposition to the militancy desired by China was rooted in their understanding of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons and their consequent ability to deter imperialists. Deterrence would allow for the peaceful expansion of communism, and highly destructive war was to be avoided. Peaceful transition to communism would now be possible through parliaments rather than through war. Rather than fomenting world revolution as the PRC militated for, the USSR wanted to focus its efforts on communist economic development, an area where it could lead unchallenged by the PRC. Although in 1961 Khrushchev committed the USSR to supporting national liberation struggles, the USSR remained sensitive to the fact that local wars could escalate into war between major powers, ultimately ending in a nuclear exchange. Indochina increasingly became the crucial case for both the USSR and PRC on demonstrating the value or folly of involvement in local wars. Following the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets redoubled their focus on using to détente buy time for internal economic buildup.<sup>23</sup>

In the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the two superpowers attempted a political solution to Laos at the 1962 Geneva Conference. The agreement they reached reflected the

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<sup>22</sup> Kochavi (2002), p. 123. Yang (2002), pp. 23–26. Brzezinski (1967), pp. 373, 386. Whitefield (2007), p. 67. Langer (1973), p. 92. The PRC held a secret conference in September 1963 between Chinese, North Vietnamese, Laotian, and Indonesian communist party leaders in which Zhou Enlai assured those present that the PRC would provide reliable support for their efforts to drive Americans out of Southeast Asia. Zhang (2002), p. 1146.

<sup>23</sup> Brzezinski (1967), pp. 399–402, 422.

interests of the United States and Soviet Union, guided principally by their desire to avoid a regional escalation that would pit the two superpowers more directly against each other. Both superpowers recognized the need for stability in their relations with one another and that Laos had little intrinsic value to either. Affecting their calculations of the stakes were confrontations between the U.S. and USSR elsewhere in the world, and the unstable alliance politics each superpower had to manage with their regional partners. However, despite a public agreement committing both superpowers to Laotian neutrality, neither gave substantive backing to Suvanna's neutralists.

### *COUNTERINTERVENTION & DURATION*

The theory expects that the predominant form of intervention during bipolarity will be counterintervention, as opposed to the multilateral interventions on the side of the state that characterized multipolarity. The structure of the system resulted in the superpowers perceiving events in Laos as a zero-sum game, paying undue attention to minor setbacks, and understanding the stake of the conflict as a slippery-slope or "domino effect." Because the stakes that external powers perceive in the outcomes of internal wars are starker, and because counterintervention works to sustain factions that otherwise would have been defeated, the number of extremely long duration internal wars increases markedly within bipolarity. This section details the perceptions of leaders on both sides concerned about the possibility of escalating counterinterventions, and details the steps taken by both superpowers to keep their affiliated factions militarily viable, increasing in intensity as the conflict wore on despite initial fears about escalation.

From 1957 through the end of the Eisenhower administration, the CIA produced a number of National Intelligence Estimates addressing Laos, its descent toward civil war, and the

increasing use of the Ho Chi Minh trail. These estimates framed each policy choice open to the president in terms of the prospects for counterintervention from North Vietnam, China, and the Soviet Union. The 1957 NIE 63.2-57 argued that the communist bloc would avoid intervention (beyond the North Vietnamese already present in Laos) into Laos because it would risk the introduction of U.S. forces, given U.S. support for the Royal Lao Government and SEATO Plan 5. The 1959 Special NIE 68.2.59 reasoned that Pathēt Lao guerilla warfare had resumed as a reaction to recent U.S. efforts in support of the Royal Lao Government's stronger anti-communist posture. U.S. intervention would be considered a threat to Hanoi and Beijing, and they would increase their support of covert DRV intervention in Laos.<sup>24</sup>

Although both the USSR and PRC wished to avoid any serious risk of expanding hostilities, Western intervention would dramatically increase the prospects for communist invasion. The 1959 NIEs 68-59 and 63-59 indicate that if U.S. aid to the Royal Lao Government and Army were to waver instead of increase, that the Neutralist government leaders would likely attempt to seek communist support. The 1960 Special NIE 68.2.60 detailed the Soviet airlift to Kônglae's neutralists and the Pathēt Lao and the instructions from the Soviet Union and China to "step up military activity throughout the country." It reported that, "the Soviets view the current situation in Laos as an opportunity to embarrass the U.S. internationally and create difficulty between the U.S. and its allies" and that "the Bloc is under considerable pressure to demonstrate the validity of its contention that the 'imperialists' can no longer suppress revolutionary movements and that the Bloc can and will support such movements."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 38–41.

<sup>25</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Pushkin stated that the airlift to Laos had been the highest priority Soviet supply operation since the Second World War.<sup>26</sup> The United States responded by arming the Lao Army and Air Force under Phūmī's control, and also beginning its clandestine partnership with Colonel Vang Pao's Hmong "Secret Army" of irregular forces.<sup>27</sup> The next month, Khrushchev made a speech on the problem of revolution in the Third World, allowing that military intervention might sometimes be necessary to ensure that national liberation movements were successful, and described Indochina as "sacred war."<sup>28</sup> The Kennedy administration, despite their concern for the world revolutionary rhetoric of the PRC, placed primary responsibility for the breakdown of Laos on the Soviets, and perceived the Soviet airlift as having given the Russians an opening to "leapfrog the Chinese" in their backyard.<sup>29</sup>

As much as counterintervention shaped superpower policy toward Laos and the breakout of the first phase of the civil war, the full effects of counterintervention appear in the second phase of the war, following the 1962 Geneva Conference and collapse of the Second Coalition. The course of the civil war was largely determined by factors entirely external to Laos: U.S. and Thai assistance and intervention; Soviet, Chinese and communist bloc assistance funneled through the North Vietnamese; the strategic necessities of the Vietnam War; and, the negotiated end of the Vietnam War. But one should not overstate the role of external powers

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<sup>26</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 354. Langer (1973), p. 73–74.

<sup>27</sup> By January 2, 1961, 184 Soviet sorties of materiel and personnel were flown into Laos in support of the neutralists, according to the State Department. Langer (1972), p. 52. Langer (1973), p. 74. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 93. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 115–117. Osornprasop (2007), pp. 355–357.

<sup>28</sup> Fursenko & Naftali (2006), pp. 330–336.

<sup>29</sup> Kochavi (2002), p. 104. Langer (1973), p. 73. The limited Chinese support for the Pathēt Lao in 1961 – six consignments of arms and ammunition – was the only significant materiel shipment made by the PRC directly to Laos before 1964. Zhang (2002), p. 1158.



in the escalating dynamic of counterintervention—escalation was typically driven by the internal factions themselves, extending their positions beyond their means, and after-the-fact receiving intensified support from their sponsors. Over its course, the Laotian civil war became a sideshow, with most external interest in Laos focused on the Ho Chi Minh trail. The struggle within Laos over the strategically important Plain of Jars followed a seasonal pattern in which the Việt Minh-led Pathēt Lao would mount offensives during the dry season and Vang Pao's Hmong irregulars would mount offensives during the wet season without decisive strategic gains made and maintained by either side.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the agreement at the 1962 Geneva Conference pledging not to use the territory of Laos to interfere in other states, the Ho Chi Minh trail would not be abandoned by the DRV. The United States had hoped that the neutralization of Laos would mitigate or remove the threat to South Vietnam, preventing the U.S. from intervening in an area of the world in which it had few intrinsic interests. This was not to be the case, as the USSR and PRC actually had very limited power to sway or constrain North Vietnamese strategy. But by publicly committing not to introduce troops to Laos, the United States ensured that the defense of South Vietnam would have to occur with boots on the ground in South Vietnam only.<sup>31</sup>

Averell Harriman, in his capacity as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, pushed Kennedy to fully comply with the agreements on the basis of an understanding he had reached with Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Pushkin that the USSR would take responsibility for ensuring the compliance of the communist side, including North Vietnam and the Pathēt Lao. Harriman believed that the Vietnamese would continue to use the Ho Chi

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<sup>30</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 361. McDonnell (1977), p. xvii.

<sup>31</sup> Kochavi (2002), pp. 122–123. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 124–125.

Minh trail inconspicuously, but would refrain from attacking the Mekong and capital in Viang Chan. There were an estimated 6,000–10,000 North Vietnamese troops in Laos when the agreements were signed, but only 40 North Vietnamese advisers were officially withdrawn from the country. The United States and Thailand withdrew their military personnel, but kept the CIA and Thai paramilitary presence. Realizing quickly that the Soviets were unable or unwilling to ensure compliance, Kennedy recreated the U.S. covert military assistance group in Thailand (Project Momentum), placed under the authority of the U.S. ambassador. In the wake of the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy had issued orders that put U.S. ambassadors in charge of the entire U.S. mission in a country, which included military advisory groups and CIA operations. Thai airfields became the training location and base of operations for American, Thai, Hmong, and Lao pilots.<sup>32</sup>

On the other side, the Pathēt Lao were almost entirely subordinated to the Việt Minh operationally and strategically, and dependent upon materiel and other aid flowing through North Vietnam. Chinese PLA troops were also operating in northeastern Laos – estimated to be over 90,000 total from 1968–1975 – ostensibly engaged in road and airstrip construction to aid the flow of materiel and troops between Laos and the PRC and North Vietnam. The PRC also sent a mission of advisers to the Xam Neua province where the Pathēt Lao were based, but over the course of 1964–1968 concluded that they had no success in exporting the Maoist revolutionary model.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> U.S. aircraft operating from Thai bases accounted for 80% of air attacks in Indochina. Osornprasop (2007), pp. 349, 357–359. Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 44, 54. Verrone (2001), pp. 117n30, 119–125. Usowski (1991), pp. 386–387. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 120, 122, 135.

<sup>33</sup> Zhang (2002), pp. 1151, 1156–1157, 1162, 1164.

The Kennedy administration was in the midst of ramping up a revised strategy toward Laos involving greater use of irregular forces and increased American air support when President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963. Lyndon Johnson inherited a crisis in Laos and did not have time to fundamentally reassess the situation. The Johnson administration altered U.S. involvement in the Laotian civil war by beginning in earnest the use of the U.S. air power and CIA involvement in supporting Vang Pao's Secret Army. Starting in 1964 and 1965, air power operations were launched to bomb targets along the Plain of Jars (Operation Triangle) and in Pathēt Lao-controlled northern and eastern Laos (Operation Barrel Roll), interdict supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh trail (Operations Steel Tiger and Tiger Hound), strike targets in North Vietnam used to stage supplies for the Ho Chi Minh trail (Operation Rolling Thunder), and provide close air support to Hmong irregulars.<sup>34</sup>

Before these air power operations were set in motion, the Johnson administration weighed two international political solutions to the Laotian crisis. The first was to abandon the Geneva mechanism and take the issue directly to the United Nations. While the Soviet Union would be expected to veto any UN Security Council Resolution condemning North Vietnam or establishing a UN peacekeeping presence in Laos, a debate in the UN could still bring publicity to the Laotian crisis, demonstrate that the U.S. was attempting to exhaust peaceful mechanisms before escalating militarily, and perhaps put international pressure on the USSR to restrain Hanoi and Beijing. But such a debate could also give communists a commensurate degree of publicity for their attacks on the U.S., give publicity that inhibited U.S. actions more than communist actions, and give the French a platform for their call to reconvene the Geneva

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<sup>34</sup> Between 1964 and 1968, U.S. aircraft flew 185,000 sorties against the Ho Chi Minh trail. Verrone (2001), pp. 171–182. Osornoprasop (2007), p. 361–362. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 135–140. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 131–132, 134.

Conference (the Johnson administration would not agree to a new Geneva Conference without a strict ceasefire, withdraw of Pathēt Lao and Việt Minh forces to positions held before their early-1964 offensive, and recognition of Suvanna as the legitimate prime minister.)<sup>35</sup> The second, proposed by Dean Rusk, was to give each Geneva signatory an outpost within Laos to ensure surveillance and security. The U.S. ambassador to Laos, Leonard Unger, countered with a less complex proposal that the UK and USSR should establish a joint military surveillance and security presence in the Plain of Jars in order to take the strategically central territory out of military contention. None of the ideas were publicly proposed, and Unger was replaced as ambassador by William H. Sullivan.<sup>36</sup>

Johnson continued to escalate the air support flown out of Thailand by Thai, Lao, and Hmong pilots. But the discussion within the Johnson administration shifted the U.S. position on the stakes involved in Laos. They recognized that the goal of Laotian neutrality was now at odds with the defense of South Vietnam. Instead of tacit understanding that Harriman had hoped to achieve – political neutralization while ignoring discreet use of the Ho Chi Minh trail – the Johnson administration shifted focus away from achieving stability between the various Lao internal factions and instead on interdiction of the materiel traveling down the Ho Chi Minh trail into South Vietnam. The U.S. involvement in the Laotian civil war was no longer directly concerned with achieving a political outcome in Laos, rather it was driven by the

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<sup>35</sup> In 1964, France was leading a call for a third Geneva Conference on the crisis in Laos. The Johnson administration rejected a third conference due to the weakness of Suvanna's government and the possibility that a new conference would entail negotiations not just on Laos but also on South Vietnam. The success of Operation Triangle in pushing back the Pathēt Lao further fortified the Johnson administration's recalcitrance toward a new Geneva Conference. Once the Plain of Jars stabilized, the administration was turned its focus back to Ho Chi Minh trail interdiction and South Vietnam. Osornprasop (2007), p. 362. McDonnell (1977), pp. 30–31.

<sup>36</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 182–188.

United States' broader strategic concerns and the extrinsic value of Laos to U.S. efforts. Laos was now firmly secondary to Vietnam and Laos' fate would be decided in Vietnam.<sup>37</sup>

Following the 1968 Tết Offensive in South Vietnam, fighting for the two theaters – the Plain of Jars and the Ho Chi Minh trail – intensified. But an uneasy understanding emerged between the two sides, limiting the actual engagement across the Plain of Jars. The most intense fighting switched to the Hmong irregulars, who were far more effective and determined than the Royal Lao Army, and the Pathēt Lao attempt to overrun and destroy Hmong mountain villages. This created approximately 200,000 Hmong refugees who fled their towns and would need to be supplied with aid by the CIA-run Air America. President Johnson also redirected U.S. bombing efforts from North Vietnam to the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. Suvanna, wary of Vietnamese intentions with the Pathēt Lao, authorized U.S. bombing against Vietnamese targets in Laos. The only targets that were off-limits were the Chinese PLA engineers building roads in northeastern Laos—Chinese sources indicate that over 170,000 Chinese engineering troops were operating in North Vietnam. These roads had been the principal supply route for Chinese aid flowing through the North Vietnamese to the Pathēt Lao since 1964, but PRC support increased dramatically from 1968 onwards.<sup>38</sup>

The Johnson administration continued and accelerated the trend begun during the Kennedy administration, focusing U.S. efforts in Laos not on resolving the question of Laotian government but on the strategic value of Laos to the Vietnam War. Likewise, Soviet and Chinese support was no longer given to the Pathēt Lao directly, but channeled almost

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<sup>37</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 136–141, 143n13. Reflecting Harriman's acceptance that the Việt Minh would continue to use the Ho Chi Minh trail, some Americans began calling it the "Harriman Memorial Highway." Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 126.

<sup>38</sup> Zhang (2002), p. 1157–1158, 1160. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 140–142, 148. McDonnell (1977), p. 40. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 126.

exclusively through North Vietnam. The dynamic of counterintervention undermined agreements to maintain Laotian neutrality and obviated subsequent proposals for a negotiated end to hostilities. Despite both sides understanding that Laos itself held no intrinsic value, neither side could abandon intervention in Laos, and instead engaged in an escalatory spiral of support. The Nixon administration would take U.S. strategy further down the path that Johnson began.

From 1969 to 1970 the Nixon administration altered U.S. strategy toward the war in Laos, even further increasing the use of air power and changing the role of the Hmong Secret Army. Eastern Laos had become a free fire zone in which U.S. pilots could choose their own targets to drop surplus bombs—42,000 sorties were flown in 1970 alone.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, Vang Pao's irregulars were increasingly being used as conventional forces in pitched battles for control of territory. The heavy losses the Hmong incurred from 1969–1972—estimated to be at least 30,000, perhaps as high as 100,000—had to be made up by more and more Thai army volunteers, nearly 15,000 by 1972.<sup>40</sup> In 1970, the left-leaning prince of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, was deposed and replaced by General Lon Nol. Where Sihanouk had allowed North Vietnamese passage through Cambodia in order to deliver materiel to their forces in South Vietnam, Lon Nol allied with the United States and South Vietnam, ending the agreement of safe passage with the North Vietnamese. The Pathēt Lao responded to the intensified air war by increasing their dependence on North Vietnamese volunteers and advisers—the total number of Việt Minh troops totaling about 40,000 by this time. Because the routes through Cambodia had been closed, the Ho Chi Minh trail was now the sole supply line flowing into South Vietnam. The

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<sup>39</sup> McDonnell (1977), p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Osornprasop (2007), pp. 350, 366. McDonnell (1977), p. 67.

Việt Minh had another 25,000 troops maintaining the trail, and were forced to consolidate their hold on it by finally seizing provincial capitals that lay along the route. The South Vietnamese army, with Suvanna's prior knowledge but public condemnation, attempted in 1971 to cut the trail off with ground forces, failing after suffering heavy casualties. By 1973, there were 70,000 Chinese PLA engineers engaged in building highways in northeastern Laos to maintain the flow of materiel into Laos.<sup>41</sup>

Following the 1972 negotiated agreements on the end of the Vietnam War, the Laotian factions were once again pressured by outside powers into a vain attempt at a coalition government. The subsequent 1973 Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation instituted a Third Coalition, which allowed the United States to save face while extricating itself from Laos. The Third Coalition was a fiction that ended rapidly as the Pathēt Lao made rapid military gains following the 1975 victories of communist parties in Vietnam and Cambodia.<sup>42</sup>

Even when both superpowers attempted to find negotiated solutions that would allow them to withdraw from a minor peripheral country in which neither had interests, the dynamic of counterintervention and the ability of internal factions and regional actors to drive further escalation against the best interests of the superpowers dragged the Laotian civil war out over sixteen years. Political solutions were rejected for intensification of intervention, especially when short-term successes seemed to indicate that the tide was turning. Both sides ended up supplying more and more materiel, engaging in more and more support operations, and committing more and more foreign troops, despite a tacitly agreed stalemate in the central strategic theater for control of Laos, the Plain of Jars. The Laotian civil war only found an end

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<sup>41</sup> Zhang (2002), p. 1160. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 142–144. McDonnell (1977), pp. 40, 57.

<sup>42</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 361. McDonnell (1977), p. xvii.

when a peace was negotiated for Vietnam, showing the degree to which Laos had become an subordinate concern amongst the superpowers' broader interests.

### *SUMMARY*

The evidence presented in this section demonstrates the expectations of the theory for the structuring effect of bipolarity on the interests of both internal factions and external powers involved in the Laotian civil war. First, the stakes in the outcome of the Laotian civil war were defined by two concepts with major implications for the relationship between the superpower struggle and the fate of the peripheries: domino theory and 'peaceful coexistence.' The evidence shows that leaders on both sides viewed Laos as intrinsically unimportant, but significant nevertheless for the stability of their rival blocs. Second, the proclivity toward counterintervention and its self-sustaining dynamic played the central role in determining the character of the Laotian civil war, in what theaters it was fought, with what means it was fought, and for how long it was fought. But, to the degree that the external powers supplied their affiliates, gave them military support, and provided them with intelligence and logistics, the escalatory dynamic was driven by the internal (and regional) factions rather than determined by the superpowers. Again, the evidence shows that leaders on both sides made conscious decisions to abandon neutrality, continue escalation against their better interests, and explicitly crafted strategies premised on the certainty of counterintervention from the other side.



## Polarity and Ideology

Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak for unmanliness... The advocate of extreme measures was always trustworthy; his opponent a man to be suspected... [E]ven blood became a weaker tie than party, from the superior readiness of those united by the latter to dare everything without reserve; for such associations had not in view the blessings derivable from established institutions but were formed by ambition for their overthrow... The fair proposals of an adversary were met with jealous precautions by the stronger of the two... Oaths of reconciliation, being only proffered on either side to meet an immediate difficulty, only held good so long as no other weapon was at hand; but when opportunity arose, he who first ventured to seize it and to take his enemy off his guard, thought this perfidious vengeance sweeter than an open one... Meanwhile the moderate part of the citizens perished between the two, either for not joining in the quarrel, or because envy would not suffer them to escape.  
—Thucydides, *History*, III.82.4–8

The theory expects that bipolarity will have a unique and predictable effect on the way in which ideology affects internal wars. Ideology within bipolarity ought to have different consequences for intervention, intensity, and duration of an internal war than ideology would within multipolarity or unipolarity. First, ideology ought to be a clearer signal of affiliation within bipolarity than any other distribution of power—like multipolarity, the superpowers sponsor an ideology that is bound up in their identity, but unlike multipolarity, partisans face a Manichean choice in affiliation, instead of being able to choose from multiple powers all sharing their ideology. Like multipolarity, ideology can give definition to internal grievances, draw the internal lines of cleavage and conflict, and create transnational and regional alliances with internal partisans. But within bipolarity, the friend–enemy distinction within the warring society mirrors the intense friend–enemy distinction between the superpowers. Second, ideology ought to intensify and lengthen internal wars within bipolarity. Factions and issues involved in the civil war, if not ideological from the start, become ideologized over the course of the conflict, increasing the internal polarization. Likewise, external powers weighing intervention are more likely to impose an ideological interpretation on the conflict within

bipolarity, and this should hold even where the actual role of ideology is tenuous or opportunistic. Because ideology serves as a much clearer signal of the eventual alignment of the state undergoing civil war, the stakes external powers perceive in the outcome are starker, the incentive to sponsor revolutionaries is higher, and the incentive to intervene (and counterintervene) is higher. Factions are less likely to quit if they believe they can reliably gain external support, and because of the increasing ideological polarization of the warring society, negotiations to end the civil war can always be spoiled, resulting in drawn out conflicts likely to end in military victory.

The Laotian civil war provides substantial evidence against which to test the theoretical expectations for bipolarity. First, Laos illustrates how ideology defines affiliation and alignment during bipolarity. Initial ideological cleavages were inherited from factions' choice of external powers when seeking support: the communist Pathēt Lao was inherently tied to North Vietnam and the USSR; the neutralist government received support from the French; and the rightwing anticommunists looked to the Thailand and the United States for assistance. Second, the course of the Laotian civil war confirms the expectation that ideology will interact with bipolarity in a way that intensifies internal wars. The case of the neutralists clearly illustrates the increasing polarization of factions within an ideological civil war. Both superpowers assumed the worst about the allegiance of the neutralist faction, imposing an ideological interpretation upon any support the neutralists were drawing. And, over the course of the war, the neutralist position became increasingly untenable, until the neutralist center collapsed and was subsumed into the left and right. Third, the Laotian civil war lasted for sixteen years, despite multiple attempts from the superpowers to impose a neutral coalition

government. The factions within Laos were incapable of overcoming mutual suspicions in order to govern, and the first resort was to resume violence, knowing that they could reliably count on the resumption or increase of external aid. Military victory became the only possible outcome, as negotiation across ideological lines had been thoroughly discredited by the end.

Two sections follow. The first examines the pre-civil war evidence to determine the extent to which internal divisions were defined by the link between ideology and external sponsorship. The roots of Laotian conflict lie in the groups that emerged from the decolonization struggles from World War II through the 1954 Geneva Conference that gave Laos its independence. The second looks specifically at the case of the neutralists. Laos is somewhat unique among Cold War conflicts, because it started with a significant political and military position standing in between ideological partisans on the right and left. We can see the expected ideological polarization as the neutralist position is destroyed over the course of the war, absorbed by both the left and right. We can also use this case to examine how the interaction between bipolarity and ideology affects freedom of maneuver—when support is withdrawn from communist or rightist factions, they have no ability to seek alternative support, which can be contrasted to the atypical ability of the neutralists to switch back and forth.

### *IDEOLOGY & AFFILIATION*

The theory expects transnational political ideology to serve as a clear link between internal factions and external powers, especially those great powers sponsoring an ideology. Unlike multipolarity, where there are multiple great powers professing related ideologies, within bipolarity there are only two superpowers and two competing ideological camps. The Laotian case gives substantial support to the theory's expectations. The ideological partisanship and factionalism characterizing Laotian politics had its roots in the independence movement.

The ideological position adopted by internal factions corresponded to the foreign power or powers that each faction believed would give it the best chance to achieve its goals. In this case, international intervention, ideological partisanship, and civil war are tightly intertwined.<sup>43</sup>

Independence for Laos was from the beginning premised on alliance with foreign powers: Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and even France. Internal factionalism that would define the later Laotian civil war first arose in the Laotian disagreements over independence, and over which foreign powers could deliver effective independence not just a new informal imperialism. The three factions that emerged during World War II and the independence struggle that led up to the 1954 Geneva Conference were defined in part by their international ally: the Royal Lao Government worked with France, the Lao Issara worked with Thailand (and had members that had worked with Japan), and the Pathēt Lao split from the Lao Issara over disagreements stemming from their desire to cooperate with the Việt Minh.

Before and during WWII, Laotians broadly perceived France as protecting them from annexation by an irredentist Thailand.<sup>44</sup> But the March 1945 Japanese *coup de force* against French control of Indochina prompted some Laotians to side with Japan over France, notably Prince Phetxarāt. The Japanese forced King Sisavāngvong to declare Laotian independence a

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<sup>43</sup> Ideology is intimately linked to the concepts of ‘party’ and ‘corruption,’ and was traditionally central to the Greek concept of *stasis*, which carried a range of meaning encompassing party, sedition, faction, discord, civil war, and revolution. Peter Euben, in his conceptual history of ‘corruption,’ notes that the republican tradition defined a corrupt society as utterly factionalized, in which each faction pretends to represent the whole while simultaneously seeking to make its voice exclusive. Corruption is the “systematic and systemic degradation of those practices and commitments that provide the terms of collective self-understanding and shared purpose.” This moral decline results in disunity, leading to a loss of identity, an incapacity to act and speak, and a shift from collective life as historical actors to an anonymous life as historical victims. Euben (1989), pp. 220, 222–223.

<sup>44</sup> Siam’s 1939 name-change to Thailand carried with it an implicit claim to all Thai-speaking peoples, which included a significant portion of the Laotian population across the Mekong. Thailand pressed irredentist demands for the return of territories ceded to French Indochina in 1904 and 1907 and attacked French forces in Laos and Cambodia. The Japanese, already occupying Indochina, imposed a ceasefire that included the cession of two Laotian territories – Champāsak and Xianyaburī – to Thailand. The Laotian Movement for National Renovation was formed to counter pan-Thaiism, and received official French support. Osornprasop (2007), pp. 350–351. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 53–54.

month later. Phetxarāt's willingness to work with the Japanese led to his confirmation as prime minister, and he moved to reduce the number of Vietnamese in the civil service.<sup>45</sup>

The Việt Minh was formed in 1941 by the Indochinese Communist Party as a broad anti-Japanese and anti-French front. The ICP itself had been active in Laos since the 1930s, although its membership was exclusively Vietnamese, and the French secret police – the Sûreté – were effective in arresting the party structure. In Laos, Marxism was perceived as a principally Vietnamese phenomenon and had little appeal, and most nationalist organizations were both anti-French and anti-Vietnamese.<sup>46</sup>

The Lao Sērī (Free Laos) was formed in 1944 with Thai support and direction as an anti-Japanese and anti-French organization. Lao Sērī received training in Thailand and support from the U.S. Office of Strategic Services in both Thailand and Laos. Although supported by and based in Thailand, the Thai were suspicious that the Lao Sērī might push for a Greater Laos incorporating the Lao-populated portions of northeastern Thailand.<sup>47</sup> Ultimately, the Lao Issara (Free Lao) movement became the principal vehicle for Laotian nationalism, uniting the above factions that had worked with the Japanese, the Thai, and the Vietnamese to oppose the re-imposition of French colonial rule.<sup>48</sup>

In 1945, the first major split in Laotian politics surfaced between the Lao Issara and the Royal Lao government. Prince Phetxarāt and the Lao Issara declared in 1945 that France's failure to protect Laos from Japan rendered void all treaties and agreements between the two,

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<sup>45</sup> The French had used Vietnamese civil servants in administrative posts throughout Indochina, leading to local resentment in Laos and Cambodia. Verrone (2001), p. 45. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 52, 56–57.

<sup>46</sup> Zhang (2002), p. 1147. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 52–53, 57.

<sup>47</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 38–39. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 57–58.

arguing that Laos should remain independent of any French colonial re-imposition. The King and Crown Prince Savāṅgyatthanā were suspicious of Prince Phetxarāt's ambitions, and so the King abrogated his declaration of independence, returning Laos to French protection. The Lao Issara disarmed French forces throughout most of Laos except the south, with the support of a Chinese Nationalist division and the Việt Minh. Meanwhile, the French assured the King that they would recognize his sovereignty if he dismissed Phetxarāt. The King's dismissal of Phetxarāt prompted the formation of a People's Committee, the creation of a provisional constitution, and a provisional National Assembly of the "Pathēt Lao" (The Land of the Lao). The King declared these events illegal, and in response the National Assembly passed a resolution deposing the King.<sup>49</sup>

The second major split occurred within the Lao Issara. The Lao Issara government prominently featured two of Phetxarāt's relatives: younger brother Prince Suvanna Phūmā and younger half-brother Prince Suphānuvong. Their preferences for political affiliation were mirrored in their personal lives. Phetxarāt had a Thai wife and would later go into exile in Thailand. Suvanna had a French wife and remained a Francophile. Suphānuvong had a Vietnamese wife who supported the Việt Minh. It was Suphānuvong who would spearhead a military convention formalizing the presence of Vietnamese military forces in Laos and creating a joint Lao-Viet General Staff to coordinate the two armies.<sup>50</sup>

A 1946 suspension of hostilities between Hồ Chí Minh and the French enabled France to refocus on the reconquest of Laos. The Lao Issara and King Sīsavāṅgvong came to a last

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<sup>49</sup> Langer (1973), p. 69. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 61–62. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 39.

<sup>50</sup> Suphānuvong had arrived late for the formation of the Lao Issara government because he was in Vietnam, contacting Hồ Chí Minh and relating Lao support for the Việt Minh and their independence. When he finally arrived in Laos, he was accompanied by an escort of twelve Việt Minh wearing Lao uniforms. Verrone (2001), pp. 60, 70. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 63–64.

minute understanding, agreeing to the monarchy's reinstatement and the King's legitimization of the Lao Issara government and constitution. The Lao Issara government fled into Thailand while the King remained to declare his fidelity to France.<sup>51</sup>

Over the period of 1946–1949, the Lao Issara was based in Bangkok with the support of the Thai government. They carried out guerilla attacks on the French in Laos along the Mekong, until the attacks prompted threats from France to Thailand, at which point the OSS advised the Lao Issara to retrench from the border. Guerilla attacks were supported by local Thai, but were principally run by Vietnamese members of the ICP. The attacks were carried out both by joint Lao Issara-Việt Minh units and all-Việt Minh units based in Thailand. Because Lao Issara contacts with the United States did not prove fruitful, many saw the Vietnamese as their sole ally in ejecting the French (although in 1947, Thailand did back the creation of the League of Southeast Asia, which brought together nationalists from Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, and Indochina). Prince Suphānuvong traveled to Hanoi to garner the support of the Việt Minh for the Lao Issara, even though France and the Việt Minh were in a ceasefire at the time.<sup>52</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Thailand underwent a military *coup d'état*, which improved Thai relations with France and removed Thailand as a base of operations for attacks on French forces. The Lao Issara leaders, with the exception of Suphānuvong, did not want to transfer their base of operations to Vietnam, because they were suspicious of Vietnamese designs on Laos and fearful of the conflict between communism and Buddhism. The ICP responded by removing moderate Lao Issara leaders from its command structure, giving operational support

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<sup>51</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 65.

<sup>52</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 51–57. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 70–74. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 45, 49.

only the committed communist members of the Lao Issara. Suphānuvong's relations with the Việt Minh and endangerment of the Lao Issara position in Thailand (having invited Việt Minh, Chinese Nationalists, and Burmese to attack the French from Thai territory) led to a Lao Issara disavowal of Suphānuvong. In 1949, Suphānuvong formed his own front, the Lao People's Progressive Organization, which was not subject to the Lao Issara.<sup>53</sup>

France directly administered the Kingdom of Laos through 1949, until it was driven to change by its failure to swiftly defeat the Việt Minh and the pressure placed upon it by the United States to make concessions to nationalist groups. A General Convention was signed between France and Laos that granted a measure of independence for Laos within the French Union. Francophile Lao accepted French hegemony over their foreign affairs, believing that they needed French protection from the Việt Minh. The moderate Lao Issara, including Suvanna Phūmā, accepted amnesty and returned to Laos to participate in the new government. Phetxarāt remained defiant in Thailand. Suphānuvong also refused the compromise and brought his front – now the “Pathēt Lao” – into an alliance with the Việt Minh.<sup>54</sup>

Mao declared the People's Republic of China in 1949, and both the PRC and USSR recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in January 1950, opening up the flow of international communist assistance to the Việt Minh. Meanwhile, the United States, Britain, and Thailand recognized the independence of Laos. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the United States began assistance to the French anti-communist efforts in Indochina, channeling military assistance through France (paying for up to three-quarters of the cost of the

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<sup>53</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> Laos gained control over domestic services, except for the Indochina-wide monetary and customs policies. Laotian foreign and defense policy was still required to be coordinated with the French Union. French forces retained freedom of movement, the right to recruit Lao, and extraterritorial legal rights. Osornprasop (2007), p. 352. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 69–70. Verrone (2001), p. 46.



war) and economic assistance directly to the Royal Lao government. The Pathēt Lao was organized in Vietnam in 1950, and featured Prince Suphānuvong as its president (in practice, its figurehead) and Kaisôn Phomivihān as minister of defense (the actual power behind Suphānuvong). In 1951, the ICP dissolved itself and was replaced by three parties – one in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.<sup>55</sup>

The political divisions constituting the Laotian civil war emerged well before Laos achieved statehood, and the factions were defined principally by their choice of international sponsors, whether Thailand, France, or Vietnam. The French-aligned Royal Lao government and Lao Issara became the neutralists. The Thai and U.S. aligned faction became the conservative anti-communists. And the Vietnamese-aligned Pathēt Lao were communist. Ideology and affiliation were clearly linked together by all factions involved in the subsequent conflict, the battle lines having been drawn before Laos had even achieved statehood.

### *POLARIZATION & FREEDOM OF MANEUVER*

“the centre cannot hold” — Yeats (1920)

The theory expects that the interactions between bipolarity and ideology will lead to increasing polarization of ongoing conflicts as the conflict endures. Within bipolarity, internal factions faced a more restricted ability to maneuver for international support. During the Cold War, leaders could and did switch alignments, but alignment choices were less flexible than in multipolarity. But as a rule, internal factions could not afford to lose the support of their co-ideological sponsor. The Laotian civil war is able to uniquely and convincingly demonstrate the dynamic of polarization by tracing the fortune of the neutralist faction, which attempted to hold the center against both the communist Pathēt Lao and the conservative anti-communist

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<sup>55</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 75–76, 78–81, 84.

forces. The neutralists allow us to contrast the freedom of maneuver they enjoyed with the more restricted freedom of the left and right, and they also allow us to examine the proclivity toward polarization that ultimately destroyed the neutralist faction. The neutralists initially aligned with France and took the central position in the First Coalition government, but as French support was withdrawn, the neutralists were supported first by the Soviet Union and then later by the United States. Without reliable support, the neutralists could not hold the center of Laotian politics and were slowly torn apart. The neutralists could not enforce order between the left and right, and often bore the brunt of attacks from both sides since neutralists were usually the head of state and governing party. Difficult strategic decisions resulted in internal divisions and defections from the neutralist camp. The plight of the neutralists as they were rent apart over the course of the war illustrates the effect of the Manichean structure created by bipolarity as it constrains the effect of ideology on internal war.

### **Forming the First Coalition**

The political process of trying to form the First Coalition government demonstrates the unique political position of the neutralists in an ideologically-divided country engaging in state-building. This episode also illustrates the tendency of the superpowers within bipolarity to impose a worst-case ideological interpretation on events. Finally, it shows the unique ability of the neutralist government to receive support (in different forms) from both sides.

In the wake of the 1954 Geneva Conference, foreign troops were withdrawn by all parties with the exception of Việt Minh troops stationed within the two Pathēt Lao-controlled provinces in the northeast. The ICSC was physically unable to verify their withdrawal, and so had to accept a declaration of withdrawal from the Vietnamese high command. With the foreign force withdrawal ostensibly complete, negotiations for the first coalition government could

begin, led by discussions between Prince Suvanna and Prime Minister Katāy Don Sasorit on one side and Prince Suphānuvong on the other. During negotiations, Katāy looked to Thailand and the United States for external support, while Suphānuvong looked to Vietnam. The Royal Lao government held elections in 10 provinces, while the Pathēt Lao protested the elections and refused to hold them in their provinces. Katāy's party gained seats but failed to form a government, leading to Suvanna taking over as prime minister, pledging "settlement of the Pathēt Lao problem" as his top priority.<sup>56</sup> Suvanna's instincts were to form a coalition government that included his half-brother Suphānuvong representing the Pathēt Lao as well as representatives of the rightists and neutralists.

However, the Eisenhower administration was fundamentally opposed to both the agreement reached at the Geneva Conference and the prospect of a Laotian coalition government that included the Pathēt Lao, considering the agreements to be an acquiescence to the spread of communism in Indochina. Instead, Eisenhower adopted a policy pledging to "refrain from the threat or use of force" with Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles aimed to protect Laos from the external threat of communist invasion in order to enable U.S. aligned Laotian leaders the freedom to suppress the domestic threat of communism. By the following year, the United States was funding the entire cost of the Royal Lao government's army and police, training Laotian officers across the border in Thailand (the French were still able to directly train officers in Laos under the Geneva Accords). On the other hand, the only source of military assistance to the Pathēt Lao at the time was North

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<sup>56</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 87–89.

Vietnam. Both militaries involved in the early civil conflict and later civil war were almost entirely financed and equipped by foreign powers from the start.<sup>57</sup>

While the United States supported rightwing politicians and generals in Laos, and the DRV supported the Pathēt Lao, other key external powers supported a neutral coalition, including France, the Soviet Union, and the PRC.<sup>58</sup> While the USSR and PRC were mostly detached from the situation at this time, France exercised some influence over Suvanna's thinking and agreed with Suvanna's goal of political accommodation and neutral foreign policy. Suvanna believed that the Pathēt Lao could be defanged if Laos were to enter into diplomatic relations with all of its neighbors, a policy he pursued by signing amity treaties with China, India, and the DRV, participating in the 1955 Bandung Conference, and visiting Beijing and Hanoi in 1956. He counted on his ability to always be able to reach agreement with his half-brother Suphānuvong, and did not believe Suphānuvong was truly a communist.<sup>59</sup> While Suvanna saw integration of Pathēt Lao into the government as the best way to neutralize the movement, the United States believed this would lead Laos down the same path as Eastern Europe through salami tactics. The U.S. CIA and French Deuxième Bureau worked at cross-purposes during the negotiation of the First Coalition, the former trying to prevent it, the latter to encourage it.<sup>60</sup>

Suvanna and Suphānuvong achieved the First Coalition government in 1957 through a communiqué agreeing to reestablishment of the Royal Lao government over the two Pathēt Lao regroupment provinces (Xam Neua and Phongsāli), integration of 1,500 Pathēt Lao officers

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<sup>57</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 89–92.

<sup>58</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 104.

<sup>59</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 353.

<sup>60</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 93–95.

and troops into the Royal Lao Army, and the rest of the Pathēt Lao troops (~4,500) to be demobilized. The National Assembly approved the formation of a government, which would include two Pathēt Lao ministers out of fourteen total.<sup>61</sup>

### **Breakdown of the First Coalition**

Despite the general international backing for a neutralized government, the ability of a neutral government to retain both popular and elite support was challenged almost immediately. During this episode, the neutralists obtained substantial support from the Soviet Union, while the United States backed rightwing generals. The manner in which the USSR supplied materiel to the neutralists also illustrated the inability of the communist Pathēt Lao (and the Việt Minh) to maneuver for direct support of their own.

The 1958 elections had resulted in a surprisingly strong showing for the leftwing candidates, forcing the rightwing and independents into a coalition government. In response to Suphānuvong's public support, the anti-communist Committee for the Defense of the National Interest (CDNI) was formed from rightwing politicians, civil servants, and army officers. The First Coalition, headed by the neutralists, had collapsed. A military incident along the germinal Hồ Chí Minh allowed the prime minister, Phuy Xananikôn, to demand emergency powers from the National Assembly for one year, which he used to eliminate the parliamentary forum enjoyed by the Pathēt Lao.<sup>62</sup> Another round of elections were called in

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<sup>61</sup> McDonnell (1977), pp. 7–9.

<sup>62</sup> The CDNI gained a prominent position within Phuy Xananikôn's government, while no cabinet positions were given to the Pathēt Lao. The CDNI had been backed by the United States and had gained four members of the cabinet without having been a party or participating in the elections. Phuy devalued the *kip*, announced that Laos would "coexist with the Free World only," did not establish diplomatic relations with the USSR or PRC, and purged Pathēt Lao sympathizers from the civil service. After obtaining emergency powers, Phuy reshuffled his cabinet, adding more CDNI officers including Colonel Phūmī Nôsavān, and cracked down on the Pathēt Lao. Phuy then declared that Laos had met its obligations under the Geneva agreements and thus limits on foreign

1960. The CDNI's candidates were financed by the U.S. and Thailand and received overt support from the Laotian police and military. The results were rigged: the CDNI candidates won in a landslide and no Pathēt Lao or leftwing candidate won a seat.<sup>63</sup>

Kônglae's coup of 1960 caught the government by surprise while they were in Luang Phrabang for the state funeral of the late King Sīsavāṅvong. Kônglae was a U.S.-trained, politically naïve, 26-year-old captain of a paratrooper battalion in the Royal Lao Army, who had in the past fought bravely in engagements against the Pathēt Lao. At a rally immediately following his coup, he called for an end to intra-Lao conflict, a return to neutrality (favoring Suvanna's policies), an end to government corruption, and removal of all foreign interference, openly criticizing "American colonialism." The National Assembly reacted with a vote of no confidence in the right wing government and asked the King to appoint Suvanna prime minister. General Phūmī returned from Luang Phrabang seeking U.S. and Thai assistance (Phūmī was the cousin-once-removed of Thai dictator Sarit Thanarat) in putting down his insubordinate captain. Once the King asked Suvanna to form a government, Kônglae ended his coup. Suvanna was able to negotiate with Phūmī to prevent conflict, despite Kônglae's opposition to Phūmī's inclusion in the new government. The United States State Department, CIA, Britain, and France were all supportive of Suvanna's new government. The Pentagon, South Vietnam, and Thailand were opposed, Thailand even going so far as to embargo trade with Laos. The CIA reconsidered and began supplying Phūmī with arms.<sup>64</sup>

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military aid would cease, a policy change that the United States endorsed and China and the DRV denounced. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 102–106.

<sup>63</sup> Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 34–35. McDonnell (1977), p. 7. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 110–112. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 353. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 112–114. McDonnell (1977), p. 15.

The Pathēt Lao announced their support for Suvanna's neutralist government and reached out to Kônglāe. When the U.S. refused to assist Laos in ending Thailand's embargo, Suvanna formally invited the Pathēt Lao to the capital for talks. In the meantime, and intra-military split emerged between neutralists loyal to Suvanna and Kônglāe, and rightists loyal to Phūmī. The U.S. continued to support Phūmī but withheld support for Suvanna and Kônglāe. The USSR then declared its willingness to assist Suvanna's government. An increasing majority of military and officers declared their support for Phūmī, forcing Suvanna to rely more and more on the Pathēt Lao in their *de facto* alliance with Kônglāe's neutralist forces.<sup>65</sup>

Phūmī began his attack on Kônglāe's forces, and Suvanna responded by requesting support from the USSR, which came via airlift from Hanoi to the Laotian capital Viang Chan. The airlift of Soviet materiel was undertaken without a sense of urgency, Khrushchev waiting almost two months to consider Suvanna's request for aid while Phūmī Nosavan (with U.S. backing) attacked the Royal Lao Army that was no longer funded by the U.S. With his forces stiffened by Thai paramilitary units, Phūmī prevailed and Suvanna's government fled Viang Chan. A vote of no confidence passed, and the King asked another prince, Prince Bunūm, to form a provisional government. The United States and Thailand quickly recognized the new government, but the communist bloc continued to recognize Suvanna's government, which had gone into exile in Cambodia. Kônglāe's forces retreated to the Plain of Jars and further solidified their alliance with the Pathēt Lao. The USSR and PRC continued to send materiel to the Plain of Jars by airlift and road via North Vietnam. Because Kônglāe was the commander of the forces representing the Suvanna government, which remained the legitimate government in

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<sup>65</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 114–115.

their eyes, they could arm the Kônglae and allied Pathēt Lao forces without running afoul of the Geneva agreements. The Soviets gave Suvanna permission to decide how much would go to the Pathēt Lao, frustrating the Vietnamese.<sup>66</sup>

Khrushchev doubted the revolutionary potential of Southeast Asia, believing that the United States still held a decisive military advantage in the region, and that the PRC and DRV were overconfident in the ability of peasant revolution to achieve results in the face of U.S. counteraction. Instead, Khrushchev believed that the Pathēt Lao could become politically dominant through a united front with the neutralists (who could be legally armed by the Soviets and protected by the 1954 Geneva Accords) and ‘salami tactics,’ obviating the need for violent revolution.<sup>67</sup> While both the Soviet Union and the North Vietnamese viewed the Laotian problem and Vietnamese problem as fundamentally entangled and indistinguishable issues, the Soviet Union pressed for a strategy of patient, political transition rather than violent revolution led by the insignificantly small Pathēt Lao. As such, the USSR dealt principally with neutralist Suvanna Phūmā from 1956 forward (the comfort of the USSR with Suvanna was part of the cause for the deep suspicion of Suvanna evinced by the Eisenhower administration). The later fall of Suvanna’s government to the U.S.-backed rightwing coup and subsequent Kônglae coup gave the USSR an entry into Laos, arranging an airlift to deliver materiel to the neutralists and communists. But the division between the USSR and North Vietnam regarding the neutralists persisted, with the Vietnamese arguing that Suvanna was an anti-communist

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<sup>66</sup> Osornprasop (2007), pp. 354–355. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 115–117. Langer (1973), p. 75. Vehnekamp, pp. 36–38.

<sup>67</sup> This may have been a misperception by Khrushchev, as Chinese sources indicate that PRC leadership also favored a united front strategy between the Pathēt Lao and the neutralists under Suvanna and Kônglae. Zhang (2002), p. 1144.



neutralist and would prevent any further gains, while the USSR remained unconcerned by Suvanna and by the aid that the U.S. was providing to the Royal Lao Government and Army.<sup>68</sup>

### **Second Coalition Collapse & Cleaving the Neutralists**

Following the Soviet airlift, the 1962 Geneva Conference attempted to re-neutralize Laos in order to remove it from superpower contestation. However, the prospects for the success of a neutral Royal Lao government were worse at the beginning of the Second Coalition than the First Coalition. The Pathēt Lao, instead of controlling two provinces, controlled about two thirds of the country's territory. On the right, Phūmī opposed the re-neutralization plan and ceasefire. When the administration suspended economic and military aid in order to coerce Phūmī into participation in the Second Coalition, Phūmī turned to illicit opium smuggling operations in order to fund his efforts. He then engaged the Pathēt Lao in the battle of Namthā, but suffered a decisive defeat by Pathēt Lao, Việt Minh, and Chinese PLA troops.<sup>69</sup> The neutralists received tepid international support from France and Cambodia, but did not have either superpower to draw from, and remained unsupported and undermined by Thailand and North Vietnam.<sup>70</sup>

Suvanna's neutralist position was tenuous from the start, and both the Pathēt Lao and Phūmī's rightists prevented neutralist forces from operating in their territories as well as propagandizing neutralists to switch allegiances. Having signed the agreements, the Soviets had washed their hands of direct engagement in the civil war that they had initially supplied. Kônglae's neutralists were left without a direct source of supplies once the airlift ceased and were instead receiving supplies from North Vietnam channeled through the Pathēt Lao. Now

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<sup>68</sup> Fursenko & Naftali (2006), pp. 325–327.

<sup>69</sup> McDonnell (1977), p. 18. Chinese sources now claim that PLA troops were involved in the battle of Namthā, whereas CIA SNIEs at the time found no evidence to support PLA involvement. Zhang (2002), p. 1145. Uowski (1991), p. 384.

<sup>70</sup> Kochavi (2002), pp. 122–123. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 124–125.

that the Việt Minh and Pathēt Lao had control over the allocation of materiel, unlike earlier when the Soviets gave Kônglae the materiel to distribute, the neutralist position was rapidly weakening. The Pathēt Lao continued to receive aid from and funneled through the North Vietnamese. Phūmī's forces (now part of the coalition) and the Vang Pao's Hmong irregulars received aid from the U.S. Suvanna, cut off from Soviet aid, finally accepted aid from the United States.<sup>71</sup>

The Pathēt Lao exploited Suvanna's switch by heightening the internal disagreements of the neutralists over accepting U.S. aid, an a dispute arose within the neutralist ranks between Kônglae and Colonel Deuan Sunarāt over whether to continue their dependence on the Vietnamese. Deuan split the Neutralists in order to form the "Patriotic Neutralists" and formally ally with the Pathēt Lao. Kônglae, now cut off from Vietnamese supplies, could not sustain the Neutralist position that Suvanna depended on. By 1963, the CIA-run Air America was delivering supplies to Kônglae's forces, although Deuan's forces shot down one of the transport planes with an anti-aircraft battery. The Pathēt Lao protected Deuan and assassinated the neutralist colonel who had been sent to arrest Deuan. Kônglae reacted by forbidding Pathēt Lao and Colonel Deuan's forces from areas under his control. After a neutralist ally of Suvanna and Kônglae was assassinated by communists, and the leftist Foreign Minister was assassinated by a Kônglae loyalist, Suphānuvong fled the capital to the Pathēt Lao-controlled portion of the Plain of Jars, and the Second Coalition had *de facto* come to an end. As fighting between Kônglae and Deuan's forces escalated, the United States supported and

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<sup>71</sup> Langer (1972), p. 69. Vehnekamp (2009), p. 63. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 122–123.

directed Vang Pao's Hmong forces to harass the Pathēt Lao in an effort to keep Kônglāe's position on the Plain of Jars viable.<sup>72</sup>

From this point the war would be fought almost entirely under the direction of external powers. Suvanna and the Royal Lao government were reduced to figureheads, symbolically important for the appearance of the possibility of neutrality, but unable to place a check on the actions of the United States or North Vietnam. Only through the threat of resignation could Suvanna influence U.S. decision-making.<sup>73</sup>

Despite his position of neutrality, Suvanna had abandoned the idea that Suphānuvong was not truly communist and that the Pathēt Lao were simply a nationalist force. He recognized the extent to which the Pathēt Lao was subordinate to North Vietnam and the number of Pathēt Lao forces that were actually Việt Minh (Suvanna had visited Hanoi in 1961 and was told by General Giáp that the North Vietnamese could not tolerate the presence of troops on the Plain of Jars other than those of the Pathēt Lao). As a consequence, Suvanna authorized "armed reconnaissance" flights made by the U.S. Navy and Air Force, as well as T-28 fighter-bombers marked as Royal Lao Air Force, but flown from Thai bases by U.S. and Thai "Firefly" pilots.<sup>74</sup>

Further operations to shore up Suvanna and Kônglāe's neutralist position were then undertaken at the request of Suvanna. In 1964, Suvanna ordered changes to the neutralist command structure, bringing the neutralist forces and Phūmī's rightwing forces into a much closer relationship. The neutralists were then re-equipped with American weapons, and

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<sup>72</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 126–130. Osornprasop (2007), p. 360. McDonnell (1977), pp. 26–27.

<sup>73</sup> Zhang (2002), pp. 1151, 1156–1157, 1162, 1164.

<sup>74</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 361–362. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 135–140. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 131–132, 134.

developed military ties to South Vietnam. Operation Triangle used American-backed air power to reinforce Kônglăe's troops on the Plain of Jars.<sup>75</sup>

Suvanna flew to Beijing and Hanoi in an attempt to secure the separation of Laotian affairs from the war between North and South Vietnam. He then held a joint meeting with Suphānuvong and Phūmī on the Plain of Jars, but the talks broke down. Upon his return to the capital, Suvanna announced his intention to resign as prime minister. By the next morning, a committee of generals had occupied all government ministries and arrested neutralists including Suvanna. Britain, France, Australia, the United States, and Soviet Union all refused to recognize the military coup, suspended all aid, and declared their support for Suvanna. Suvanna was released but remained under *de facto* house arrest. Kônglăe threatened to retake the capital and the Pathēt Lao voiced their support for Suvanna rejecting all demands from the generals. The coup collapsed.<sup>76</sup> Suvanna and Phūmī mutually recognized the coup as a sign of their own vulnerability, and so Suvanna merged the neutralist and rightwing armies, while inviting the Pathēt Lao to take part (they denounced the merger). The merger with the rightwing caused further defections from the neutralists to Deuan's Patriotic Neutralists. The Pathēt Lao and Việt Minh launched a joint operation that drove neutralist forces from the Plain of Jars almost entirely. A last ditch attempt to restore the Second Coalition in Paris failed. By the end of 1964, the Patriotic Neutralists and Pathēt Lao signed a formal alliance. With that, the neutralists as an independent political and military force in Laos were subsumed entirely by the left and right.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 362. McDonnell (1977), pp. 30–31.

<sup>76</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 131–133.

<sup>77</sup> Correll (2005), p. 65. Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 133.

Events in 1965 and 1966 would grievously weaken the Royal Lao and neutralist forces. RLA forces did not bear the brunt of the conflict with the Pathēt Lao – this was left up to Kōnglāe’s forces and Vang Pao’s Secret Army. Their efforts were directed instead at controlling lucrative opium smuggling, establishing fiefdoms out of their military regions, and politicking over the high command as it had been reorganized following the merger of rightist and neutralist forces. Anger over the command structure led a group of generals to seize a radio station to make demands for better treatment of the army, resulting in a clash between their forces and Phūmī’s. As his forces faltered, Phūmī fled to Thailand for permanent exile. Without a strong leader, the RLA descended even further into corruption, drug smuggling, organized crime, and even arms sales to the Pathēt Lao. In 1966, an internal power struggle within neutralist leadership, and involving rightist generals, led to Kōnglāe’s dismissal and flight into exile in France, resulting in further defections from Kōnglāe’s neutralists to the Pathēt Lao-allied Patriotic Neutralists.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Third Coalition & Termination**

The last gasp for Suvanna and a neutralist government came in 1973 with the negotiation of the Third Coalition. The Third Coalition provisional government featured Suvanna as the prime minister as the sole remaining representative of the neutralist position. The 12 cabinet positions were split between the two sides. The government was hobbled by disagreements over elections, insubordination from former Secret Army Hmong, opium production, student demonstrations, and labor strikes. In 1975, when communist forces were victorious in both Vietnam and Cambodia, the Pathēt Lao abandoned the ceasefire and began to retake the Plain of Jars. In the face of mass protests, several rightist cabinet ministers and RLA generals fled to Thailand, along with Vang Pao. Thousands of Lao, Hmong, Chinese, and

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<sup>78</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 145–147. McDonnell (1977), pp. 18, 20–21, Chapter 4.

Vietnamese refugees began to cross the Mekong into Thailand. Suvanna appointed replacement ministers who were acceptable to the Pathēt Lao, and moved to quell RLA opposition to Pathēt Lao expansion into the territories they controlled. Rightists who had fled were tried *in absentia* and those that remained were instructed to attend reeducation camps.<sup>79</sup>

Elections for the National Assembly were held before the end of 1975, and all candidates appearing on the ballot were required to have approval of the Pathēt Lao—the neutralist position had finally been erased. Pathēt Lao rallies in Vientiane denounced the monarchy and Suvanna’s government, demanding a new popular democratic regime. The Suphānuvong’s Consultative Council and Suvanna’s Provisional Government endorsed the decision to end the monarchy, after which Suvanna and Suphānuvong flew to Luang Phrabang and presented King Savāṅgvatthanā the demand for abdication, which he accepted. The Pathēt Lao convened in secret an extra-constitutional National Congress of People’s Representatives that accepted the king’s abdication and proclaimed the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.<sup>80</sup>

The decline and division of the neutralists is an illustrative case of ideological polarization and freedom of maneuver. Aside from initial support from France, the neutralists did not have a dedicated external sponsor. They received aid from both superpowers at different times, switching back and forth. Their neutrality was the factor enabling their freedom of maneuver when attempting to garner external support. The Pathēt Lao and rightwing generals did not enjoy the same freedom of maneuver. When the USSR bypassed the North Vietnamese and Pathēt Lao and supplied Kônglae directly, they had no other recourse for support, staying aligned with the USSR out of recognition that the PRC was not strong

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<sup>79</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 158–163.

<sup>80</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 163–164.

enough to counter the U.S. When the U.S. withdrew support from the rightwing generals, they turned to corruption, opium and gold smuggling, arms sales, and organized crime to support themselves. The greater freedom of maneuver available to the neutralists came with its costs—as they switched back and forth and politics became more polarized, their unity was fractured and eventually the neutralist position was entirely subsumed by defections or mergers with the left and right.

### *SUMMARY*

The theory expected bipolarity to change the role of ideology in shaping the character of internal war, in a way that is predictable and differentiable from ideology's role in multipolarity or unipolarity. It predicts that ideology will be a much stronger signal of affiliation within bipolarity than multipolarity. Because it is a stronger sign of affiliation, it affects the political freedom of maneuver of internal factions as they seek support. And, it expects that as conflicts go on, they will become more ideological and more polarized, as a result of internal factions seeking support and external powers imposing ideological interpretations on conflicts or factions that might otherwise not be genuinely ideological.

The historical record shows that each faction's ideology was intrinsically linked to its early choice of external affiliation: the Pathēt Lao with North Vietnam and the USSR; the right with Thailand and the United States; and, the neutralists with France. Within multipolarity, there were multiple great powers sharing ideologies, making ideology a weaker signal of affiliation. The Pathēt Lao and North Vietnamese could have made a decisive shift from the USSR to the PRC as their principal sponsor, but calculated that the PRC was not enough to balance the United States. The rightwing generals and Thailand could have sought assistance from France or Britain when cut off from U.S. aid, but such an idea was never proposed.

Bipolarity restricted the viable options open to internal factions seeking support. Contrasting the neutralists with the Pathēt Lao and the rightwing forces showed the effect of ideology within bipolarity in restricting freedom of maneuver. It also showed how ideological polarization increased as the war dragged on, ending with the moderate part of the Laotian politics perishing, fracturing and dividing until joining the left or the right.

## **Polarity and Sovereignty**

The theory expects that the institution of sovereignty will face different constraints within bipolarity than within other polarities, and that the effect of changes to sovereignty upon internal wars will be predictable. First, bipolarity allows for the exercise of informal imperialism in place of formal colonial relationships. Informal imperialism is effective because core relations are clearer, valence of outcomes in the periphery is clearer, freedom of maneuver enjoyed by factions is more restricted, and ideology functions as a clear sign of alignment. Informal imperialism carries with it some of the political problems that the threat of formal colonization does—neo-colonialism or informal imperialism becomes a salient issue when an external power intervenes on the side of their affiliates. The importance of neo-colonial fears to the genesis and course of the internal war is rooted in the decolonization experience, lending support to the theory's expectation that extra- and intra-state wars ought to be studied more in terms of continuity than as categorically separate phenomena. The initial partisan divisions and weak state omnibalancing cannot be understood without knowing how and why the institution of sovereignty changed to accommodate the two superpowers. Second, bipolarity's structuring effects on interests and ideology have knock-on effects for the international regime that the superpowers attempt to impose on the newly created states entering the international system.



Whereas exclusion could work within multipolarity, because alignment was often indeterminate, the clarity of affiliation resulting from bipolarity (and its structuring effect on ideology) means that exclusion alone was unsatisfactory. In order to manage new states as objects of international contention, political neutralization was necessary beyond exclusion.

The Laotian civil war provides strong support for the theory's expectations regarding the structuring effect of bipolarity on the institution of sovereignty. The destruction of European colonial powers and reconcentration of power in two new superpowers as a result of WWII made possible the conditions for the Laotian civil war. Decolonization throughout the world resulted in about ninety newly created states. Loss of imperial sovereignty, as a result of WWII and post-war pressure from the superpowers, was a consequence of and constitutive of the fall of France from great power status. Like many other post-colonial states, Laos was born into conflict and external interference, and state-building seemed to necessitate external support. But garnering such assistance opened Laotian politics to charges of neo-colonialism and fear of annexation from France, the United States, China, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and Thailand. Initial divisions within Laos were premised on the various factions' choice of the external supporter they thought would more effectively secure their independence. Despite the threat that these countries posed to Laotian autonomy, factions nevertheless continued to grow more dependent upon them to fight their internal enemies over the course of the war. Finally, there were multiple attempts by the superpowers to enforce an internationally-monitored neutralization of Laos, which they ostensibly hoped would allow them to avoid confrontation over a minor country in which neither had intrinsic interests. Their political commitment to neutrality and exclusion of foreign troops led the United States (and to a lesser extent the

USSR) to intervene through limited or deniable modes: not directly with ground troops, rather by providing non-military aid packages, arming regional and internal proxies, engaging in covert operations, and providing air support.

Two sections follow. The first section looks at neo-colonialism and weak state bandwagoning as two sides of the same coin. Laotian factions allied with external powers against their domestic opponents, but these same powers appeared to pose a threat to Laotian sovereignty, either through annexation or neo-colonialism. Even the appearance of neo-colonialism carried significant political currency, sharpening the domestic grievances driving the civil war. The second section examines the three attempts of external powers to produce a neutral Laos, expecting that neutrality would remove it as an object of superpower contestation.

### *NEO-COLONIALISM & BANDWAGONING*

The theory argues that weak states are not especially prone to internal war, but that the politics of imperialism play a significant role in determining the behaviors of both internal factions and external powers. Further, “weak” states ought to engage in bandwagoning behavior with external states that threaten their sovereignty, a risk they run in order to counter the threat posed by rival internal factions. The Laotian civil war confirms the theory’s expectations about the behavior and concerns of newly created states facing internal upheaval. The need for rapid state-building in the face of domestic conflict leads to two parallel responses: seeking material aid and governance assistance from external powers; and, seeking security guarantees, defensive pacts, or military assistance. Their domestic state-building raises concerns of neo-colonialism, while their external state-building raises concerns about their ability to remain independent while bandwagoning. Initially Laos agreed to remain within the French Union in exchange for French defense of their territorial integrity against the Vietnamese. During this period (as

detailed in the previous section) internal factions seeking Laotian independence were defined and divided by their external supporters, demonstrating that the root of the internal war exhibited clear continuity with the national liberation (extra-state) war. Once fully independent, Laos received major economic assistance from the United States distributed through a “neo-colonial” administration set up in parallel to the actual Laotian government.

Fear of French recolonization animated the initial formation of factions during the independence struggles, and (whether genuine or propaganda) claims of neo-colonialism or annexation animated resistance to U.S., Thai, and Vietnamese presence in Laos. Because the freedom of maneuver of internal factions was lesser in bipolarity, the superpowers could afford to take an anti-colonial position toward the holdings of European ex-great powers, while still being able to practice informal imperialism through affiliated factions. The roots of Laotian factionalism and affiliation with external powers in their independence struggle, and the state-like entities with notional borders, state apparatuses, and an undeveloped sense of nationalism that emerged from the 1954 Geneva Conference, lends support to the decision of this dissertation to examine extra-state wars alongside intra-state wars.

### **1954 Geneva Conference**

Laos found itself the object of international contestation before having been able to engage in state-building. The borders within Indochina – Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia – were established by the 1954 Geneva Conference and reflected the French colonial administrative divisions. In practice, the borders were ignored by the Vietnamese and by the populations living on either side of the borders, populations who were often ethnically indistinguishable.<sup>81</sup> What emerged from French Indochina were really three state-like entities struggling with self-

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<sup>81</sup> Pholsena (2012). Osornoprasop (2007), p. 351. Verrone (2001), pp. 34–35, 43.

determination, both in their ability to make their state effectual and in their conflicting visions for Indochina. State-building was the primary issue facing Laos, but it faced internationalized internal conflict before it had a chance to consolidate state capacity. This left the Royal Laotian government heavily dependent on foreign aid, and with a weak military and even weaker control over the military. The country emerged in the context of a historically precarious position as a buffer state between North Vietnam, which had pretensions of reunifying Indochina, and Thailand, which (as Siam) had made a tributary out of Laos before its annexation by the French in 1893.<sup>82</sup>

Siam's 1939 name-change to Thailand carried with it an implicit claim to all Thai-speaking peoples, which included a significant portion of the Laotian population across the Mekong. Thailand pressed irredentist demands for the return of territories ceded to French Indochina in 1904 and 1907 and attacked French forces in Laos and Cambodia.<sup>83</sup> Aware of the threat of annexation by its irredentist neighbors, Laotians broadly perceived France as protecting Laos. The first partisan groups emerging from WWII were not anti-French, but anti-Thai and anti-Japanese (World War II weakened France's hold over Indochina, creating the possibility of permanent Japanese colonization). As prime minister, from 1941–1945 when Laos was under Japanese influence, one of Prince Phetxarāt's major initiatives was to remove Vietnamese civil servants from Laotian government (the French had placed Vietnamese in administrative posts throughout Indochina, leading to local resentment in Laos and Cambodia).<sup>84</sup> North Vietnam itself presented its own annexation threat to Laos. In 1951, when the ICP was dissolved and replaced by three parties – one each for Vietnam, Laos, and

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<sup>82</sup> Osornprasop (2007), p. 350. McDonnell (1977), pp. iii, xvi.

<sup>83</sup> Osornprasop (2007), pp. 350–351. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 53–54

<sup>84</sup> Verrone (2001), p. 45. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 52, 56–57

Cambodia – the Vietnamese Worker’s Party assured its members that it “reserves the right to supervise the activities of its brother parties in Cambodia and Laos” and to propose a “federation of the states of Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia, if the three peoples so desire.”<sup>85</sup>

The final blow to French recolonization of Indochina was their defeat by the Vietnamese at Điện Biên Phủ. The very reason for the presence of the French garrison was their obligation to defend Laotian territory from another invasion by the Vietnamese, following General Võ Nguyên Giáp’s 1953 strike against Viang Chan and Luang Phrabang. In December 1953, Giáp began another offensive that would ultimately lead to the surrender of Điện Biên Phủ on May 7, 1954, the day before the opening session of the 1954 Geneva Conference.<sup>86</sup> Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam would all become independent as a result of the conference, but for Laos the threat from its neighbors was such that King Sīsavāṅgong had felt more comfortable allying with Laos’s former colonial ruler, France. Nevertheless, over the course of the subsequent civil war, the Pathēt Lao would ally with North Vietnam, while the rightwing forces would be supplemented by Thai paramilitaries and air force. The Suvanna’s neutralist Royal Lao Government, Kônglae’s neutralists, and Deuan’s Patriotic Neutralists would on different occasions ally with the North Vietnamese-directed Pathēt Lao, and on later occasions Suvanna and Kônglae would ally with the Thai backed by the U.S.

### **First Coalition Collapse & Civil War Onset**

The breakdown of the First Coalition and the outbreak of the first phase of the civil war were centered on the issue of the RLG’s corruption and U.S. “neo-colonialism.” Laotian national politics were characterized by little central state capacity, a divided and insubordinate

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<sup>85</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 75–76, 78–81, 84.

<sup>86</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 75–76. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 82–85. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 63.

military, assassinations, and coup attempts. A generous aid program gave the United States leverage over the Laotian government, enabling it to topple Suvanna's First Coalition and replace it with a rightwing government under Phuy Xananikôn. Phuy's corruption and crackdown on the Pathêt Lao led to the first major outbreak of violence. After the king's death, Phuy was deposed by Colonel Phūmī, followed by rigged elections financed by the U.S. This precipitated Captain Kônglae's coup to restore Suvanna and end "American colonialism." The civil war would then break out in earnest when Phūmī attacked Kônglae's forces.

Because the post-Convention government was weak, the United States had begun a program of cash grants, commodity imports, and economic projects (e.g. infrastructure, road building, transport, communications). The aid programs created opportunities for Lao politicians and generals, Thai, Chinese, Indians, and Europeans living in (or moving to) Laos to receive assistance by taking anti-communist stance. U.S. aid to Laos was the most generous of any aid program in Indochina or Southeast Asia, and was according to some estimates the most generous U.S. aid program *per capita* of any in U.S. history.<sup>87</sup>

However, the aid was not distributed equally across the populace, with rural Lao receiving less than 10% of the aid, and much of the aid being redistributed through clan patronage networks. The aid program would also become a target for leftwing and neutralist criticism of the government, principally because it had created a parallel structure to the actual government administration comprised of aid workers, their Lao employees, and (mostly Filipino) foreign nationals. The parallel structure was intended to both minimize the corrupting effect of aid on the Royal Lao government itself, and avoid having any aid money go

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<sup>87</sup> Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 70.

to Suphānuvong's Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction. But most damagingly, the grants and commodity imports created the opportunity for embezzlement through exchange rate manipulation and black market sales of government-purchased commodities, leading to a 1600% inflation of import prices by 1958. This led to a devaluation crisis when the U.S. demanded that the Lao *kip* no longer be set at an artificially high value relative to the dollar. Suvanna opposed devaluation because it would lead to even further inflation. Because of his refusal, the U.S. suspended aid, and Suvanna's attempt to sustain the First Coalition fell, to be replaced by Phuy Xananikôn and his attempt to form a rightwing government. The CDNI, backed by the United States, gained a prominent position within Phuy Xananikôn's government—the CDNI gained four cabinet positions without having been a party or participating in the elections, while no cabinet positions were given to the Pathēt Lao. Phuy devalued the *kip*, announced that Laos would “coexist with the Free World only,” did not establish diplomatic relations with the USSR or PRC, and purged Pathēt Lao sympathizers from the civil service. The corruption of the mismanaged aid program would become the subject of Congressional hearings in 1959.<sup>88</sup>

Under the agreement between Suvanna and Suphānuvong that had made possible the First Coalition, the Pathēt Lao battalions were to have integrated with the Royal Lao Army, but in the wake of the coalition's collapse and Phuy's crackdown, the battalions refused. Suphānuvong was placed under house arrest, and one battalion surrendered, but the other battalion escaped encirclement by the Royal Lao Army. Phuy's government declared a state of emergency in northeast Laos, and in response Pathēt Lao guerillas began to overrun RLA

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<sup>88</sup> Zhang (2002), p. 1143. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 90–92, 101, 103–104. McDonnell (1977), p. 10.

garrisons. The government alleged that the DRV was behind the Pathēt Lao's offensive, but a UN fact-finding mission found no evidence of such during a four-week investigation. Meanwhile, the Pathēt Lao made substantial gains throughout four provinces in the northeast and began insurgency in the south.<sup>89</sup>

The Lao military subsequently came close to a coup in late 1959. King Sīsavāṅgong and Prince Phetxarāt died, while pro-French and pro-U.S. Crown Prince Savāṅgvatthanā ascended to the throne. Colonel Phūmī used the pretext of a Pathēt Lao attack to surround the house of Prime Minister Phuy and, under pressure, Phuy resigned. The U.S. and other Western ambassadors relayed to the new king that a military government would not be acceptable. Phūmī stepped back from the brink, notifying the king that his mission to restore legality was complete and that he looked forward to reestablishment of civilian government. The king then appointed a caretaker government, while allowing Phūmī to remain Minister of Defense.<sup>90</sup>

Elections were called for 1960. The CDNI's candidates were financed by the U.S. and Thailand and received overt support from the Laotian police and military. The Pathēt Lao denounced the elections, alleging that Laos was being turned into an American colony. Their offensives in the lead-up to the election resulted in their control of about 20% of the Lao population and about half of Laos' territory removed from government control. The election results were rigged: the CDNI candidates won in a landslide and no Pathēt Lao or leftwing candidate won a seat. However, in the wake of the election victory for Phūmī, Suphānuvong

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<sup>89</sup> Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 27–28. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 107–109.

<sup>90</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 109–110.



and other imprisoned Pathēt Lao leaders escaped their imprisonment and marched in secret back to their headquarters in Xam Neua.<sup>91</sup>

Kônglae's 1960 coup caught the government by surprise while they were in Luang Phrabang for the state funeral of King Sisavāngvong. Kônglae was a U.S.-trained, politically naïve, 26-year-old captain of a paratrooper battalion in the Royal Lao Army, who had in the past fought bravely in engagements against the Pathēt Lao. At a rally immediately following his coup, he called for an end to intra-Lao conflict, a return to neutrality (favoring Suvanna's policies), an end to government corruption, and removal of all foreign interference, openly criticizing "American colonialism."

The civil war began in earnest when Phūmī attacked Kônglae's forces, and Kônglae's requested assistance from the USSR, resulting in the 1961 airlift. It is clear that state-weakness – inability to rule the entirety of its territory or monopolize force, coups, low capacity, and corruption – were central to the outbreak of the civil war. The politics of "neo-colonialism" were a politically effective charge against the corrupt government funded by U.S. aid and thereby subject to U.S. leverage. It was not only salient within Laotian politics, but also as part of the superpower competition, reinforced by Khrushchev's 1959 statement that the USSR would support any insurgency seeking national liberation from economic colonialism.<sup>92</sup>

### **Civil War and USAID**

The United States nevertheless continued to run a massive and intrusive aid campaign in Laos, despite its role in the outbreak of the first phase of the civil war. Following the 1962 Geneva Conference, the collapse of the Second Coalition, and the split between Kônglae's

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<sup>91</sup> Vehnekamp (2009), pp. 34–35. McDonnell (1977), p. 7. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 110–112. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 77.

<sup>92</sup> Verrone (2001), pp. 85–90. Kochavi (2002), p. 105.

neutralists and Colonel Deuan's Patriotic Neutralists, U.S. aid returned as a major source of corruption and state weakness.

During the period, Phūmī's defense and interior ministry forces emerged as the most prominent power in the capital, buoyed by U.S. support. USAID expanded to the point of becoming a parallel administration, in what Martin Stuart-Fox asserts was "a structure that could only be described as neo-colonial."<sup>93</sup> With American aid and administration, the Laotian government did not engage in basic state-building, such as providing rural Lao services in exchange for land tax revenue. Rather than tax elites, the Royal Lao government printed money to cover their deficits, resulting in a sevenfold increase in the base money supply from 1960 to 1965.<sup>94</sup> Laos never had the state strength to overcome the Pathēt Lao problem that the country was born with, but the aid given to sustain the Laotian government also prolonged its weakness and prevented it from developing its own base of power and state capacity. Descent into civil war foreclosed the possibility of overcoming the state's weakness until the war was terminated.

The 1973 Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation created the Third Coalition government, but once again USAID became a political target for neo-colonialism grievances. In 1975, protesters coordinated by the Pathēt Lao seized USAID facilities in Vientiane and held it until the United States agreed to withdraw all USAID personnel. In response, the United States terminated all aid to Laos, which caused a collapse in the value of the *kip* and massive inflation. U.S. aid was replaced by communist bloc aid and the

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<sup>93</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 130.

<sup>94</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 129–130.

introduction of 500 Soviet advisers. The proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic followed shortly thereafter.<sup>95</sup>

### *NEW STATE NEUTRALIZATION*

Bipolarity's new state regime was markedly different from the regime during multipolarity. The Monroe Doctrine attempted to enforce the exclusion of external states seeking recolonization of the New World states. The exclusionary regime reflected an acknowledgement of the other structural factors at work: the stakes the great powers perceived in maintaining stability in the periphery, the broad freedom of maneuver possessed by peripheral actors, the indeterminacy of ideology as a sign of affiliation, and the structural proclivity toward formalizing imperial relationships in the periphery. The structure of international politics changed following World War II, and so the regime tenuously maintained by the United States and USSR was one of neutralization rather than exclusion. Varied attempts saw success in Austria and Finland, but quick failures in Germany and Indochina. Neutralization was an acknowledgement of the new structural factors of bipolarity: higher stakes in outcomes in the periphery, the export of core instability, the ability of ideology to act as a sure sign of affiliation, restricted freedom of maneuver for factions, and informal imperialism's effectiveness. Because the internal ideological politics of a country typically predicted its alignment, exclusion was not sufficient for either superpower seeking a guarantee that a given new state would be removed as an object of international contention. Neutralizing a state's internal politics (or at the very least its foreign policy) was the only way to prevent a new state from adding to the power of one bloc or the other. While the other structural proclivities of bipolarity meant that neutralization was routinely violated, it did constrain the

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<sup>95</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 158–163.

modes of intervention pursued by the superpowers, typically lengthening internal wars by restricting the use of decisive force.

Laos was subject to three attempts at neutralization: the 1954 Geneva Conference; the 1962 Geneva Conference; and, the 1973 Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation. The two Geneva conferences established the expectations for Laotian neutrality and restrictions on foreign presence that shaped how the United States, and to a lesser extent the other involved powers, would intervene in Laos: overtly following the letter of the law while covertly breaking it in both letter and spirit.

The lead-up to and negotiation of the 1954 Geneva Accords defined how the Laotian civil war would later be fought and the role to be played by external powers supporting their favored factions. The French defeat by the Việt Minh at Điện Biên Phủ in 1954 – an operation undertaken partially out of France’s obligation to defend Laos – coincided with the opening of conference.<sup>96</sup> At the conference, Laos was a tertiary matter, falling in importance behind the Korean War and Vietnam. Despite Laos being an afterthought at the conference, the decisions made in 1954 would affect how the war in Laos was fought and ultimately how the war in Vietnam was fought, hamstringing Western efforts from the start.

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<sup>96</sup> In 1953, General Võ Nguyên Giáp directed an invasion of Laos with Việt Minh and Pathēt Lao forces. He made quick advances and briefly threatened both Viang Chan (the seat of government) and Luang Phrabāng (the seat of the monarchy) before retreating back to northeastern Laos. Giáp’s goal was a tactical strike against French forces in Indochina, but it afforded Suphānuvong the opportunity to establish a resistance government in the two captured provinces of northeastern Laos, Xam Neua and Phongsāli. Verrone (2001), pp. 75–76.

The 1953 armistice in Korea put domestic pressure on France to end the Indochina war. The same year the French signed a Treaty of Friendship and Association with Laos, granting Laos full independence in return for their continued membership in the French Union. As part of their obligation to defend Laos, the French garrisoned Điện Biên Phủ to prevent another invasion by the Việt Minh. Giáp began an offensive in December 1953 that would ultimately lead to the surrender of Điện Biên Phủ on May 7, 1954, the day before the opening session of the Geneva Conference. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 82–85. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 63.

The conference produced the 1954 Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Laos, which was signed by the French on behalf of the Royal Lao government and by the Việt Minh on behalf of the Pathēt Lao.<sup>97</sup> All foreign forces were to withdraw from the country with the exception of a small French military force for training and garrison purposes (the Việt Minh denied having any forces present in Laos). The introduction of weapons was prohibited except for “categories specified as necessary for the defense of Laos.” An International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC) was created consisting of India, Canada, and Poland. Its function was to monitor compliance with the ceasefire, demobilization, and withdrawal of foreign troops, and report to the co-chairs of the Geneva Conference, Britain and the Soviet Union. The United States did not sign the agreement. The Royal Lao government committed to never pursue a policy of aggression, never allow its territory to be used by another power for aggression, nor join a military alliance contrary to the UN Charter or the terms of the Geneva Conference ceasefire. The Pathēt Lao was allotted Xam Neua and Phongsālī provinces as its internationally recognized regroupment areas, where they were then to be demobilized.<sup>98</sup>

The 1954 agreement contained within in the political constraints that would shape the 1962 Geneva Conference and the character of the Laotian civil war. First, both superpowers could afford to be anti-colonial while still exercising informal imperialism. Informal imperialism was made possible by the greater clarity of alignment provided by ideological

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<sup>97</sup> The Geneva Conference featured delegates from the Royal Lao Government, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North), the Government of Vietnam (South), France, China, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Britain. The Pathēt Lao had no separate representation despite Soviet attempts to obtain it, but the DRV’s delegation included two members of the Pathēt Lao. Zhou Enlai achieved a compromise agreement that gained the Pathēt Lao representation not as a resistance government but as a guerilla movement whose combatants would ultimately be demobilized. Zhou stated at the conference that he believed he could persuade the Việt Minh to withdraw from Laos and Cambodia provided that no foreign military bases remained. Langer (1973), p. 71. Stuart-Fox (1997), p. 85.

<sup>98</sup> McDonnell (1977), p. 5. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), pp. 63–64.

affiliation within the structure of bipolarity. Second, the politics of newly created states had changed. Rather than a broad zone of exclusion, neutralization was specific to individually contested states and hinged on their abstention from military alliances and a politically balanced coalition government.<sup>99</sup> The commitment to neutrality would define Kennedy's later approach to Laos. Third, the ban on foreign forces would prevent the United States (and China) from openly sending troops to fight in Laos, unlike in Vietnam where the U.S. was able to commit military forces to the ground. Fourth, the *de facto* control of the Pathēt Lao over two provinces bordering North Vietnam meant that the Việt Minh would not have to honor the agreement calling on all foreign forces to withdraw, presaging the unwillingness of the Việt Minh to uphold negotiated agreements, the inability of the RLG to enforce their borders, and the unwillingness of the ICSC to enforce any violations of the Geneva agreements.

Eight years later, the 1962 Geneva Conference became the central moment in defining the international politics of the Laotian civil war. The agreement structured the modes of intervention by external powers, defining the character of the civil war given that the internal factions were almost entirely directed and supplied by those same external powers. The ideological balance specified for the Second Coalition government of Laos both acknowledged the effect of ideology and reflected the 1954 effort at neutralization.

When the first phase of the civil war broke out between Phūmī and Kônglāe, Suvanna's government fell and he fled into exile in Cambodia. Suvanna echoed the prior call by Cambodian Prince Sihanouk for a second Geneva Conference to reestablish Laotian neutrality. France, the USSR, and China endorsed the idea. As Phūmī's fight against the neutralists and Pathēt Lao

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<sup>99</sup> Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 101. Warner (1994), p. 688. On Cold War neutralizations, see Crawford (2003).

dragged on over the first four months of 1961, the newly elected Kennedy administration began to lean toward a political rather than military solution. President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev issued a joint statement at their 1961 summit supporting “a neutral and independent Laos under a government chosen by the Laotians themselves,” and negotiation between the concerned powers in order to guarantee the neutrality. The USSR and Britain called for a ceasefire in advance of the second Geneva Conference—Moscow had to apply pressure to the PRC, DRV, and Pathēt Lao to achieve the ceasefire. Suvanna and Suphānuvong both made trips to Beijing and Hanoi as part of the ceasefire effort. The United States and the Soviet Union also had to exert significant pressure on Thailand and North Vietnam to even participate in the Geneva Conference much less come to an agreement on ceasefire and neutrality.<sup>100</sup>

The princes met in January 1962 and agreed to a coalition government in which Suvanna’s neutralists would hold the majority of cabinet positions, while the rightists and Pathēt Lao would have equal but minority representation. The Kennedy administration attempted to ensure that the defense and interior ministries would be reserved for neutralists, but could not secure that guarantee. Instead of joining the coalition, Phūmī fought the Pathēt Lao in the battle of Namthā, but was defeated by Pathēt Lao, Việt Minh, and Chinese PLA troops.<sup>101</sup> The Kennedy administration admitted to the Soviet Union that Phūmī’s actions were a provocation and reassured them that the U.S. remained committed to a neutral Laos. At

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<sup>100</sup> Despite having agreed to the ceasefire, the neutralist and Pathēt Lao armies made a last minute offensive, taking hold of two thirds of Laos by the day before the conference. And, during the conference the ceasefire was violated by a Pathēt Lao driving Vang Pao’s Hmong irregulars out of Phādong, and allowing the ICSC to inspect the site for violations of the ceasefire only after the battle came to an end. The U.S. made the decision to use the CIA to build up Vang Pao’s army and support Kuomintang irregulars operating near the PRC border. Phūmī became an uncooperative client, rejecting the U.S. adoption of Laotian neutrality, so the State Department shifted its support back to Suvanna. Osornprasop (2007), pp. 357–358. Kochavi (2002), p. 109. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 116–121. McDonnell (1977), p. 17. Langer (1972), p. 1

<sup>101</sup> McDonnell (1977), p. 18. Zhang (2002), p. 1145. Usowski (1991), p. 384.

this point, Phūmī finally joined Suvanna and Suphānuvong in the coalition negotiations.

Within five days, the Second Coalition was agreed to, with Suvanna and the neutralists taking prime minister and 11 cabinet positions including defense and interior, while the Pathēt Lao and rightists would each take 4 cabinet positions. The new government announced a fresh ceasefire, opened relations with the PRC and DRV, forswore the protection of any military alliance (e.g. SEATO), pledged to eliminate foreign interference into its affairs (although no-strings-attached aid could be received from any country), and pledged to remove foreign troops from its territory. All countries participating in the 1962 Geneva Conference signed instruments guaranteeing not to interfere in Laos, to introduce foreign troops, to establish a military base within Laos, or to use Laotian territory to interfere in another country.<sup>102</sup>

The 1962 re-neutralization of Laos was an acknowledgement of the effect that bipolarity and ideology have on new states and internal wars, and it attempted to remove Laos from international political contestation not simply through exclusion of foreign interference, but by obviating the need for foreign interference through internal ideological balance. Eleven years of internationalized civil war later, neutralization was pursued once more. But by 1973, neutralization through the negotiation of a Third Coalition was simply the fig leaf that enabled the United States to end its intervention in Laos.

While previous attempts at negotiation between Suvanna and the Pathēt Lao had been premised on completion of preconditions – including the withdrawal of U.S. forces or Vietnamese forces – by the end of 1972 all preconditions for negotiation had been dropped. Peace talks in Paris between the United States and North Vietnam made jockeying for position important. North Vietnamese negotiator Lê Đức Thọ assured Henry Kissinger that with an

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<sup>102</sup> Kochavi (2002), pp. 115–116. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 121–123.



agreed ceasefire in Vietnam, the DRV could deliver a ceasefire in Laos within a month. As promised, an Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation was agreed to shortly after the January 1973 ceasefire was announced by the U.S. and DRV.<sup>103</sup>

The agreement stipulated, like all previous ones, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and military installations. By the end of the year, most U.S. advisers and Thai army volunteers had been withdrawn (the Thai exit was accelerated by the 1973 collapse of the anti-communist military government in Thailand following massive student demonstrations, replaced by a neutral civilian government). But like previous withdrawals there was no corresponding exit of Vietnamese forces. Vietnamese work improving and expanding the Ho Chi Minh trail increased following the ceasefire, and 20,000 PLA troops remained in northeast Laos engaged in engineering and road construction. What remained of Vang Pao's Hmong forces were integrated into the Royal Lao Army.<sup>104</sup>

The Third Coalition provisional government featured Suvanna as the prime minister as the sole remaining representative of the neutralist position. The 12 cabinet positions were split between the two sides. Both sides administered their zones of control separately, but because of the agreed neutralization of Viang Chan and Luang Phrabang, the Pathēt Lao now had forces inside the Royal Lao territories without having conceded Royal Lao forces inside their own. A 45-member Consultative Council was also created by the agreements, which had equal status to the neutral government. Suphānuvong returned to the capital and took a position as the head

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<sup>103</sup> Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 295. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 150–153.

<sup>104</sup> Osornprasop (2007), pp. 366–367. Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 153, 156–158. Zhang (2002), p. 1157.

of the Consultative Council – giving him standing equivalent to Suvanna – rather than a subordinate position within the balanced cabinet as a Pathēt Lao representative.<sup>105</sup>

Neutralization was both a recognition of and a naïveté toward the inherent proclivity within bipolarity for ideological conflicts to attract external intervention. Both the United States and the Soviet Union pursued neutralization in a number of cases in an attempt to remove certain states from contestation. Both superpowers recognized that they had no intrinsic interests in Laos. So the political neutralization of Laos was an attempt to manage the place of this newly created state born into a global bipolar ideological contest. But the commitment to keep a country neutral was a willfully naïveté (or cynically made) pledge. Neither side was willing to abandon its co-ideological partisans, so internal factions always had the ability to escalate conflict beyond what the superpowers ostensibly desired. The superpowers may have wanted neutralization, but the internal factions certainly did not.

### *SUMMARY*

The evidence of the Laotian case illustrates how bipolarity structures the institution of sovereignty. Laos is an example of the massive wave of decolonization that occurred when European colonial powers were destroyed and the superpowers stood in the way of the re-imposition of formal imperial sovereignty. Both superpowers were able to exercise informal imperialism through their partisans. Neo-colonialism became a concern central to the grievances held by the Laotian factions, whether these grievances were real or were manufactured for propaganda purposes. Laos faced fears of annexation from both Thailand and Vietnam, as well as “neo-colonialism” from the parallel administration run by the United States through USAID. Laos was clearly dependent, in a clearly corrupting way, on U.S. aid

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<sup>105</sup> Stuart-Fox (1997), pp. 157–158. Hamilton-Merritt (1993), p. 304.

programs, and the charge of American colonialism was a potent and motivating one. The Laotian civil war also serves as an example of the new state regime that the superpowers used to manage newly created states. The regime of neutralization was different from the earlier regime of exclusion, because the logic of bipolarity was significantly different from the logic of multipolarity. Even granting the possibility that superpower desire for neutralization was genuine, their three attempts at Laotian neutralization in 1954, 1962, and 1973 were quickly undermined by noncompliant internal factions that had no interest in neutrality. The historical record appears to be congruent with the expectations of the theory for the structuring effect of bipolarity on the institution of sovereignty and the resulting character of internal war.

## **Conclusions**

If the Laotian civil war had occurred during multipolarity or unipolarity we would expect to have a significantly different character across many different aspects of the conflict. But the evidence from the case is a clear demonstration that bipolarity had a structuring effect on the character of the Laotian civil war in ways that were expected by theory.

The interests of internal factions seeking support and external powers weighing intervention in Laos were significantly shaped by the bipolar distribution of power. Whereas the core instability of multipolarity led to a stability preference in the peripheries, the bipolar conflict structure led to an export of instability to the peripheries. Because there were only two superpowers that could project decisive power, the freedom of maneuver enjoyed by internal factions seeking external support was far more restricted during bipolarity than multipolarity. Likewise, because there were only two superpowers, the valence of events in the periphery was clearer to the external powers weighing the stakes of internal war outcomes. Thus,

counterintervention rather than multilateral intervention was the dominant mode of external power intervention into internal wars. But because of the risk of escalation, even minor crises in the periphery had the potential to become major international security threats. Despite both Khrushchev and Kennedy realizing that Laos was too small and distant to warrant the risk of escalation, both nevertheless intervened and intensified the internal war. The Eisenhower administration very clearly viewed the conflict in terms of zero-sum thinking and the potential for escalation, given Laos' role in the promulgation of the domino theory. Laos was viewed as an object of international contention not because of any intrinsic value, but because of its extrinsic value to the superpowers, to their alliance blocs, and to strategically related conflicts.

Despite the multipolar and bipolar periods both featuring a transnational revolutionary ideological conflict—liberalism/republicanism against various forms of conservatism, and socialism/communism against various forms of anti-communism—the role played by ideology within bipolarity was different in ways that profoundly affected internal wars. Within multipolarity, ideology was not a clear signal of affiliation with external powers and was not nearly as effective in gaining external support. The Laotian case study demonstrates that within bipolarity ideology was a clear and effective form of affiliation with an external power, in many ways to the detriment of internal factions whose ability to maneuver for support was far more limited. When Phūmī or other rightwing generals were cut off from U.S. support, they did not have the option to switch sides, instead turning to corruption, arms sales, and opium and bullion smuggling to finance their activities. When the Soviet Union decided to directly support Kōnglāe's neutralists instead of funneling aid through the Pathēt Lao or Việt Minh, the communist factions had no ability to attract support from outside the communist world, nor as

Hồ Chí Minh recognized could they afford to write off alignment with the USSR in favor of the PRC given the bipolar international distribution of power. When the United States cut off aid to the neutralist-led Royal Lao Government, they were able to appeal to the Soviet Union for aid, and when Soviet aid ceased, the neutralist-led RLG returned to American support. Because of the limited freedom of maneuver enjoyed by ideologically-affiliated internal factions, the external powers were more able to practice informal imperialism – for example, the substantial role of USAID in the governance of Laos – rather than establishing a formal colonial relationship to reduce uncertainty about alignment.

The theory also argues that ideology within bipolarity will increase the sponsorship of internal wars, increase the polarization of the factions as the conflict wears on, and exacerbate the internal security dilemma such that battle deaths increase and duration increases as the difficulty of negotiating a termination rises. Laotian factionalism was from the very beginning linked to choice of external sponsor for independence, a strategic and ideological link that carried through to the onset of the civil war. The polarization of Laotian politics very clearly increased over time, resulting in the weakening, division, and destruction of the neutralist position. The wholesale slaughter of the Hmong over the course of the civil war, and the ethnic cleansing they faced following the civil war, demonstrated the increased intensity of battle deaths during ideologically-fueled internal wars within bipolarity.<sup>106</sup> And the delayed termination of the war – not resolved until the external sponsors were willing to negotiate an end to Vietnam – was due in part to the difficulties arising from negotiation in good faith across a bitter ideological divide. Clear evidence of this exists in the negotiation and aftermath of each of the three coalition governments, in which the mutual suspicions and bad faith negotiating led to the violation and resort to use of

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<sup>106</sup> On the fate of the Hmong following the war, see Hamilton-Merritt (1993), Chapters 22–28.

force almost immediately, ultimately ending the war in a military victory for the Pathēt Lao rather than in a neutralized government. Both multipolarity and bipolarity feature military victories as the norm for internal war termination, but for different reasons: in the former, military force is employed on the side of the state to crush upheavals; in the latter, counterintervention and ideological polarization undermine the possibility of an effective negotiated settlement.

The effect of the shift in polarity from multipolarity to bipolarity on imperial sovereignty is also different in the bipolar period as compared to multipolarity or unipolarity. New states were created out of the collapse of the colonial empires of ex-great powers, and these states were created principally in the Old World rather than the New World because of the different geopolitical patterns of imperialism.<sup>107</sup> The politics of new states born into bipolarity were different from those born into multipolarity. Instead of a politics of exclusion – i.e. the Monroe Doctrine – bipolarity and ideology made for a politics of neutralization – penetrating and arranging the new state’s internal politics so as not to exacerbate the international political divide. Neutralization was the primary means by which the superpowers attempted to mitigate the possibility of escalation. Fear of French recolonization animated the initial formation of factions during the independence struggles, and (whether genuine or propaganda) claims of neo-colonialism or annexation animated resistance to U.S., Thai, and Vietnamese presence in Laos. But, because the freedom of maneuver of internal factions was lesser in bipolarity, the superpowers could afford to take an anti-colonial position toward the holdings of European ex-great powers, while still being able to practice informal imperialism through affiliated factions. The roots of Laotian factionalism and affiliation with external powers in their independence struggle, and the state-like entities with notional borders, state apparatuses, and an undeveloped

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<sup>107</sup> Abernethy (2000), Chapters 3–7.

sense of nationalism that emerged from the 1954 Geneva Conference, lends support to the decision of this dissertation to examine extra-state wars alongside intra-state wars.

As with the Uruguay case study, the evidence of the decision-making concerns of the parties to the Laotian civil war indicates that the broader patterns found in the quantitative data are likely being generated by the causal processes hypothesized by the theory.

# The Kosovo War, 1998–1999

## *CHAPTER SIX*

The 1998–1999 Kosovo War is a case of internal war occurring during the unipolar period. The historical record of this conflict can be congruent with or falsify a number of claims made by the theory. The case was selected such that the independent variables – interests, ideology, and sovereignty – could be held at intermediate values that are relatively constant across all three cases. That means that this case had to feature: great power extrinsic interests in the conflict; internal faction appeals for support; a limited intervention; an ideological aspect; colonialism as an issue; and, contention over the political place of newly created states. The Kosovo War is a rich case upon which to test this dissertation’s theory, giving us the ability not only to test how unipolarity affected the international politics surrounding this internal war, but also how unipolarity affected the role of transnational political ideology and how unipolarity allowed for informal imperial relationships thereby affecting the politics of the civil war.

First, this case features a limited intervention by the United States-led NATO alliance, which consisted of a 78-day bombing campaign and a prior commitment against introducing



ground troops. The threat of a Russian counterintervention did play a role in bilateral negotiations and domestic politics, but was never a serious or feasible option. Second, there was a transnational ideological element that during bipolarity would have been significant, but in the context of unipolarity was unimportant. Enverist Stalinism, Titoism, orthodox communism, West European socialism, and Anglo-American

#### Expectations for Unipolarity

System	
Conflict inherent	Low
Core complexity	Low
Valence of events	Unclear
Interests	
Freedom of maneuver	Low
Periphery relationship	Disengagement
Intervention type	Arms-length/ mediated
Duration	Indeterminate
Termination type	Negotiated
Ideology	
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate
Ideology and duration	Indeterminate
Sovereignty	
Imperialism	Informal
New state regime	Internationalization

liberalism identified different actors, but ideology ultimately had little or no effect on the formation of transnational links between internal factions and external powers. And third, the former Yugoslavia was host to a number of mutually incompatible nation-building projects that resulted in a decade of civil war following the Cold War. Managing the new states required international legal, institutional, and political maneuvering.

This chapter begins with a summary of the Kosovo War, and a discussion of the war in its broader context of post-Cold War conflicts. We then proceed with the analysis in three parts:

Part One examines the effect of unipolarity on the actors' interests, decision to intervene, and freedom of maneuver. The theory expects that external powers weighing an intervention will be driven more by their extrinsic interests in the outcome of the conflict than by any intrinsic value that the country has for them. In this case, the United States intervened in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for reasons more closely tied to its relationship with its

European NATO allies than to any vital U.S. interests in Kosovo or the FRY. Further, the theory expects that interventions undertaken by the sole polar power will be characterized by disengagement: if there is an intervention at all, it manifests as an arms-length intervention, often through a mediating institution or coalition, with low-risk means when using of force, and without a decisive termination. Additionally, this section illustrates the very limited freedom of maneuver possessed by internal factions – Slobodan Milošević and the Kosovo Liberation Army – in seeking support.

Part Two examines the effect of unipolarity on transnational political ideology. The theory expects that ideology will have the least significance within unipolarity as compared to multipolarity and bipolarity. Great powers sponsor ideologies, but within unipolarity the superpower has no peer competitor to sponsor a rival ideology. The consequence is that ideological affiliation does little to affect how internal actors appeal for support and maneuver politically, nor does it necessarily affect how the superpower perceives the stakes of the conflict. During the Kosovo War there were a range of actors with a range of ideologies that during bipolarity ought to have played a central role in shaping transnational alliances and external power intervention. During the Cold War the division between Milošević's Titoist communist background and the KLA's whiff of Enverist Stalinism would likely have involved the Soviet Union and China as part of their Sino-Soviet ideological contestation. The liberal United States and liberal/socialist Western Europe would likewise have perceived some stake in the preservation of Titoism as an independent or anti-Soviet manifestation of communism, although a direct intervention would likely be out of the question. But as a result of the shift

from bipolarity to unipolarity, these ideological identities played almost no role in determining the outbreak of the civil war or external support for affiliates.

Part Three examines the effect of unipolarity on the institution of sovereignty. The Yugoslav wars of the 1990s were part of a larger wave of new state creation, border revision, and national reconfiguration in the wake of the Cold War. Formal colonial sovereignty was eliminated over the course of the bipolar period, but “neo-colonialism” was still a potential political fear. Kosovo and Russia both articulated their grievances in terms of Kosovo’s “colonial” status. The colonial anxieties revolving around new state creation were bound up in the reinvigorated institutional architecture of post-Cold War Europe. International institutions for security, peacekeeping, governance, and development had become functional once the ideological superpower contest ceased. The competing institutions involved in the management and resolution of the Kosovo crisis had two key effects: first, the United States was able to quickly disengage from Kosovo because it was able to hand off the conflict to institutional management; and second, the mix of institutions that prosecuted the war and took over for post-conflict reconstruction demonstrated the degree to which new states would be enmeshed in the international order sponsored by the unipolar power.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the case study’s results and examines the degree of congruence between the theory and the expected evidence found in the Kosovo War.



Political map of Kosovo, 1998, produced by the United States Central Intelligence Agency. Courtesy of the University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.

## Overview of the Kosovo War

Kosovo was a province of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) that wanted to secede. The FRY's population was majority Serbian Orthodox, but its province of Kosovo was majority Albanian Muslim. When the Cold War ended, several of Yugoslavia's republics sought independence, fought wars of secession, and achieved statehood. Because Kosovo was a province within Serbia, not a republic within Yugoslavia, its attempt to gain peaceful international recognition like the secessionist republics failed. FRY president Slobodan Milošević would not relinquish Kosovo because of its historical, nationalist, and religious significance to Serbians.<sup>1</sup> Escalating attacks by Kosovar guerillas and the FRY security forces created hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees, which drew international attention and resulted in an intervention by NATO to end ethnic cleansing.

The Kosovo War's origins lay in the 1989 revocation of the autonomous status the province had enjoyed within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia since the 1974 Constitution. The 1987 turn of Slobodan Milošević from communist party leader into Serbian nationalist, combined with Belgrade's assertion of control over the Kosovar Albanian-majority province, sparked a cycle of nationalist outbidding among the leaders of the constitutive republics of the FRY. While Yugoslavia disintegrated – suffering wars of secession from Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia – Kosovo remained quiescent, despite having been the spark for resurgent ethno-

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<sup>1</sup> Kosovo Polje (Field of Blackbirds), located in what is today the Priština District, was the location of a 1389 battle between Serbians and the Ottoman Empire. The outnumbered Serbian and Bosnian troops were annihilated, but inflicted heavier casualties on the invading Ottoman force and killed Sultan Murat Hüdavendigâr in battle. On the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, Slobodan Milošević recited the 'Kosovo curse,' an apocryphal pronouncement made Prince Lazar of Serbia before the Battle of Kosovo: "Whoever is a Serb and of Serb birth / And of Serb blood and heritage / And comes not to fight at Kosovo / May he never have progeny born from love / Neither son nor daughter! / May nothing grow that his hand sows / Neither red wine nor white wheat! / And may he be dying in filth as long as his children are alive!" The Battle of Kosovo has maintained an important place in the construction of Serbian identity and nationalism over the centuries. On the other side, the Tomb of Sultan Murat, also located in Kosovo Polje, gained politico-religious significance for local Muslims.

religious nationalism. Under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova, Kosovo adopted a strategy of non-violent resistance while pressing Belgrade and the international community to recognize its bid for independence. The 1995 Dayton agreements in the wake of the Bosnian War did not include any discussion of the status of Kosovo—a diplomatic compromise seen as necessary to get Milošević to sign on to the agreements. Kosovar Albanians became disenchanted with Rugova's strategy of non-violence, but had few means to pursue a war of secession until the 1997 collapse of neighboring Albania. Suddenly, Albania's entire stock of weaponry was on sale, giving Kosovar Albanian rebels the means to arm themselves and train across the border.<sup>2</sup>

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began as a loose network of uncoordinated cells engaging in attacks on Serbian police, but gradually began to escalate. By 1998 the confrontations had increased dramatically compared to the previous year. The FRY military began to take more serious operations against the rebels, leading to the attempted arrest of Adem Jashari (a key player in the growth of the KLA), and resulting in the March 1998 massacre of 58 members of the Jashari clan under artillery fire. In response, the Contact Group and UNSCR 1160 imposed embargoes on the FRY. The creation of a martyr out of Jashari led to a rapid expansion of Kosovar Albanian defense cells that began to affiliate with the KLA, and an increase in the number of weapons flowing across the border from Albania. The FRY military campaign in the summer of 1998 led to the displacement of 200,000–300,000 Kosovar Albanians, prompting the UNSC to pass Resolution 1199 in September 1998 demanding a ceasefire and withdrawal of FRY forces from Kosovo. On 13 October 1998, NATO voted to authorize air strikes (ACTORD) if FRY forces were not withdrawn in 24 hours. Milošević did

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<sup>2</sup> Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000), Chapter 1.

pull back his troops, but NATO kept the activation order in place. On 24 October 1998, the UNSC passed Resolution 1203 which confirmed the FRY withdrawal, and the agreement between the Contact Group and Belgrade to allow OSCE monitors (the Kosovo Verification Mission) to deploy in Kosovo. The KLA took advantage of the FRY withdrawal to regroup and retake positions that the Serbian forces had captured during the summer offense.

By January 1999, clashes between the KLA and Serbs had renewed, leading Milošević to authorize an “anti-terrorist” operation. On 15 January 1999, FRY forces assaulted Račak, leading to the massacre of 45 Kosovar Albanians. In February 1999, the Contact Group summoned Yugoslav and Kosovar representatives to negotiations at Rambouillet. Initially neither side would agree to a compromise position on the status of Kosovo: not independent, but substantially autonomous, protected by NATO forces given free movement not just in Kosovo but throughout the FRY, and allowed a referendum on Kosovo’s future status after three years. After being pressed by diplomats, the Kosovar representatives signed the agreements on 18 March 1999, but Milošević would not. The next day the OSCE observers were withdrawn. An additional 150,000–200,000 refugees had been generated in the first three months on 1999.<sup>3</sup>

By 24 March 1999 NATO began its bombing campaign. The FRY military began its operations, resulting in the expulsion of more Kosovar Albanians. During the conflict, 863,000 civilians were displaced from Kosovo and a further 590,000 were internally displaced, totaling over 90% of the Kosovar population. The UN’s Independent International Commission on Kosovo would place the number of deaths at approximately 10,000, the vast majority ethnically

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<sup>3</sup> Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000), Chapter 2.

Albanian, with a further 3,000 missing. The NATO bombing lasted from 24 March to 10 June 1999 (78 days), comprised of 38,400 sorties of which 10,484 were strike sorties. The bombing did little damage to Serbian forces operating in Kosovo, so on 23 April 1999 NATO authorized the bombing of military, industrial, infrastructure, and media targets in Serbia itself. A German peace plan put forward at a G8 meeting in May became the basis for negotiations between Russian Foreign Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Milošević to end the war. On 1 June, the FRY indicated to Germany that it would accept the peace plan, with the Serb Parliament passing the plan on 3 June, and NATO ceasing its air campaign on 10 June. The UNSC immediately passed Resolution 1244 which outlined the post-conflict administration of the province under UN civil administration including the KFOR international security presence.<sup>4</sup>

## **Related Conflicts and Global Context**

Unlike the previous two waves of state creation, Kosovo was not part of the decolonization of European overseas colonial holdings. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia into the fifteen post-Soviet states and (at present) seven former Yugoslavian states (with the status of Kosovo still contested) was more akin to the post-WWI wave of state creation out of the defeats of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German empires. These new states were part of a broader change to regimes and borders throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia: the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe; the 1990 reunification of East and West Germany; the 1993 Velvet Divorce of Czechoslovakia; and, the secessionist and irredentist conflicts in Transdniestria, the Russo-Baltic borders, Adjara, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, and so on. At root, this collection of changes to borders and

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<sup>4</sup> Independent International Commission on Kosovo (2000), Chapter 3.



regimes was caused by the fall of the Soviet Union from its position as the superpower peer to the United States, and by the delegitimization of communist ideology resulting from the USSR's economic decline. More directly, the rise of Yeltsin at the expense of Gorbachev shifted Russia's independent foreign policy away from Soviet efforts to prevent the breakup of Yugoslavia and toward support for the legitimacy of self-determination.<sup>5</sup>

Observers of the Yugoslav wars expected Kosovo from the beginning to be among the most explosive of the potential flashpoints: "The large-scale Kosovo secessionist war was not only predictable, but had also been expected to explode every year since 1992, testifying to the futility of European conflict prevention policies."<sup>6</sup> Expectations for conflict were unfulfilled by the peaceful resistance efforts of Ibrahim Rugova and the LDK. The same year that the 1989 revolutions were producing liberalizing regime changes throughout Eastern Europe, the autonomy that Kosovo had enjoyed since 1974 was abolished by Belgrade, the ethnic discrimination described by ethnic Albanians as "apartheid" intensified, and the first (disorganized and short-lived) armed resistance group of this period, *Çeta e Llapit* emerged. In response, an Assembly of Kosovo drafted a 1990 Constitutional Declaration, and unsuccessfully attempted to assert Kosovo's status as a republic equivalent to the other Yugoslav republics. As the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia broke up in 1991 and 1992, Kosovar Albanians set up an alternative political structure for a 'Republic of Kosovo' and carried out parliamentary

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<sup>5</sup> Sulejmanović (2008), pp. 14–16. Likely also contributing to the policy shift, Milošević had supported the 1991 coup attempt against Yeltsin. Hosmer (2001), p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Baev (1999), p. 87. Although Baev is right to criticize conflict-prevention policies with respect to Kosovo, NATO did meet in London in 1990 to assess the security implications of a breakup of Yugoslavia. The outcome of the meeting was a non-binding NATO Strategic Concept (NSC-1990), which would serve as the conceptual basis for the later non-binding NSC-1999 promulgated during the Kosovo War bombing campaign. Ong (2003), pp. 91–92. Further, Kosovo was included on the agenda in initial pre-Dayton attempts to resolve the Yugoslav crisis in 1991 (The Hague) and 1992 (London). Buja (2011), p. 7. Bekaj (2010), pp. 9, 23. Weller (1999), pp. 217–218.

and presidential elections.<sup>7</sup> But instead of sparking a secessionist conflict, the Rugova-led LDK attempted to take a different course than Slovenia and Croatia, engaging in peaceful resistance and the construction of a parallel government.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the delay between the initial wave of new state creation constituting the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity, the Kosovo War nevertheless demonstrates broader significance, not just as a singular case, but as an example of broader post-Cold War trends. First, it was one of many conflicts emerging from the collapse of the communist world across Eurasia. Second, it is a clear example of the declining importance of transnational political ideology. Third, it demonstrates the political and institutional stakes involved in the question of new state creation. The Kosovo War was an internationalized and transnational conflict from its inception, and its character cannot be explained in isolation or as a wholly internal conflict.

The rest of the chapter proceeds in four parts. Part One assesses the structuring effect of unipolarity on the interests of internal factions and external powers weighing intervention into the Kosovo War. Part Two examines whether unipolarity constrained the effect of ideology on the conflict, insofar as it shaped the ideological links between internal factions and the relevant external powers. Part Three discusses the effect of informal imperial sovereignty on

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<sup>7</sup> Wolff (2003), p. 82. Bekaj (2010), pp. 12–13. Smith (2001), pp. 2, 13. Caplan (1998), p. 748. Friedrich, Ischinger and Scharping (2000), p. 9. Judah (1999), p. 10. Bellamy (2001), p. 51. Hosmer (2001), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> “Milošević’s reimposition of Serbian power in Kosovo sparked a cycle of competitive nationalisms, which by 1991, was to lead to the demise of Yugoslavia and to war... Because the cancer that killed Yugoslavia began in Kosovo, it was reasonable to expect that, if there was to be a war – it would begin in Kosovo. But the expectation proved wrong. The Albanians had fought the Serbs at least four times in the twentieth century, so the Albanian decision not to fight in the early 1990s was born not of passivity but of shrewd logic... Although police repression against Albanians was fierce, Rugova’s activities were tolerated: Belgrade may have calculated, rightly, that if the pacifist ‘President’ were removed from office, radicals preaching violence would fill the leadership vacuum... Rugova was a pacifist but he was also a realist. In 1992 he said: ‘the Serbs only wait for a pretext to attack the Albanian population and wipe it out. We believe that it is better to do nothing and stay alive than be massacred’. The vast majority of Kosovo Albanians heartily endorsed this.” Judah (1999), pp. 11–12. See also, Hedges (1999), p. 30, and Maull (2000), p. 2.

the genesis and termination of the war. First, it discusses whether Kosovo's "colonial" status within the FRY had important implications for the descent into internal conflict. Second, it examines the threat of neo-colonialism and the political contestation over the institutional regime established for managing new states. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the findings and assess the degree to which the historical record is congruent with the theory's expectations.

## **Polarity & Interests**

The theory predicts that internal wars within unipolarity ought to exhibit several characteristics that distinguish them from internal wars occurring within bipolarity or unipolarity. First, this case study illustrates the problems faced by internal factions and external powers navigating the uncertain politics of unipolarity. The stark military imbalance is clearly and explicitly perceived by leaders, there is little threat of counterintervention against the superpower, and the threshold for superpower intervention is low. Second, according to the theory, multipolarity and bipolarity are inherently conflictual structures, whereas unipolarity is not; so while outcomes in the periphery are politically integrated into core conflict during multipolarity and bipolarity, during unipolarity the core and periphery are politically disintegrated. The sole superpower's behavior is thus characterized by disengagement—lack of interest, leadership, planning, and strategy—and a diffuse conception of its interests (humanitarianism or the international order). Third, because the valence of events in the periphery is often unclear and the value of allies potential more than actual, the interests and stakes perceived by external powers are low.<sup>9</sup> Finally, in unipolarity internal factions have only

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<sup>9</sup> Mowle & Sacko (2007), p. 603.

one decisive option when appealing for external support, so their freedom of maneuver is even more constrained than in bipolarity.

The Kosovo War provides strong support for the expectations of theory for the character of internal war during unipolarity. The United States was the only country with the capabilities to decisively intervene in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but was politically disengaged and uninterested in doing so. There were no other countries capable of intervening in Kosovo, neither a joint European intervention nor a Russian (counter)intervention was feasible given their relative military weakness. This gave rise to very explicit discussions of unipolarity and multipolarity and the problems presented by U.S. '*hyperpuissance*' and 'hegemonism.' Despite an effluence of power, the United States' behavior was disengaged, characterized by a dearth of attention, leadership, planning, or politico-military strategy. The reasons for intervention were framed in universalist terms – humanitarianism, prevention of ethnic cleansing – and in terms of the institutional relevance of NATO, but not because of any specific threat to NATO or to NATO member states. The United States did not intervene to create a specific regime type in the FRY or Kosovo, nor did the United States have ideological affiliates to defend. Finally, the freedom of maneuver enjoyed by internal factions was lower even than bipolarity. Milošević attempted to court Russia and to split some European countries within NATO from the United States, but without conflicting ideology or strong competitive interests among the external powers, he could not fashion an appeal capable of garnering decisive support. The KLA likewise attempted to court the United States and Europe, but neither would diplomatically support the KLA, after which its strategy was to provoke atrocities to draw in a NATO intervention.

This section proceeds in four parts. First, it provides evidence that all the involved leaders acknowledged unipolarity, and that the unipolar military imbalance shaped their decision-making with respect to Kosovo. Second, it demonstrates the extent of U.S. disengagement from peripheral conflict by showing the United States' vague conception of its interests, its inability to devote sustained attention to the constantly tumultuous region, its unwillingness to lead its allies, and the lack of planning or strategic thinking before and during the intervention. Third, it details the extrinsic interests of the United States in the Kosovo War, centered on its relationship with NATO, Europe, and Russia. It also shows evidence that other articulated or imputed U.S. interests, humanitarianism and regime change, are unconvincing as motivations. Fourth, it demonstrates that freedom of maneuver for internal factions – Milošević and the KLA – was at its most restricted within unipolarity.

#### *UNIPOLARITY, MILITARY IMBALANCE & COUNTERINTERVENTION*

Leaders in Europe, Russia, China, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia explicitly acknowledged the unipolar distribution of power in the post-Cold War world. The diplomatic maneuvers of Russia and even U.S. allies were shaped by their perception of unipolarity as the crisis unfolded and as the war was prosecuted. The military imbalance affected how European NATO members participated in and reacted to the war, while also obviating the possibility of Russian intervention to support Milošević. The Russian race to occupy Priština's Slatina airport at the end of the war demonstrates the infeasibility of an actual Russian counterintervention.

Before and after the Kosovo War, French and Russian statesmen framed the conflict in terms of unipolarity, argued that the U.S. actions were made possible by the unipolar structure of international politics, and made the normative case for a return to multipolarity. The

French Foreign Minister Hubert Védérine coined the term '*hyperpuissance*' in 1999 in order to contrast the unbalanced American unipolar position with the former American position as a *superpuissance* alongside the Soviet Union. Likewise, the Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov promulgated a doctrine of multipolarity, in which Russia would attempt to counterbalance its dependence on the West by developing ties with other poles of power (China, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria). Russian analysts saw the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity as stimulating a convergence of interests between Russia and Europe. The consolidation and emergence of the EU as an actor independent of the U.S. (and of NATO's monopoly over European security) would create another 'pole of power' in a multipolar world. Analysts argued that the end of bipolarity constituted by the disintegration of the USSR drastically changed the balance of power toward the United States, and that the Kosovo War was "the best evidence that serious shifts in the balance of power were fraught with dramatic changes for the world."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 128–129. Stepanova (2000), pp. 206–207. Levitin (2000), p. 134. Rontoyanni (2002), p. 814. "Russia and Europe share common security and foreign policy interests related to post-bipolar challenges of conflicts in the post-Communist space and the emergence of a new phenomenon, the Islamic dimension of European security. Furthermore, Russia does not perceive the European Union/Western European Union enlargement as a security threat (in contrast to NATO's enlargement). Both Russia and the EU are interested in stimulating multipolarity in world politics," and "[T]he political system of... the U.S. is no guarantee that it will behave prudently and in a civilized manner on the world scene. Complete sway breeds euphoria, adventurism and a belief in one's absolute impunity." Arbatova (2001), pp. 67, 76.

The description of the consequences of unipolarity by Russian statesmen and analysts would be familiar to any neorealist. Indeed, international political "realism" enjoyed resurgence within Russia at the expense of Yeltsin's perceived "international institutionalism." A NATO study following the Kosovo War argued that Russians concluded that, "[T]he capacity of any nation in the current world system to influence developments would be based on possessing sufficient power or military force." Russia's 'weakness' implied that it would not be able to achieve its objectives in a world community where force prevails. ...Traditional 'realist' assumptions that security would result from a balance of power rather than institutional cooperation and that the major objective for nation states should be acquiring more power rather than fostering cooperative efforts were becoming more accepted when many believed that Russia had simply 'sold out' vital interests in offering repeated concessions to the West. ...Russians would also conclude that many countries, intimidated by NATO's overwhelming and sophisticated display of force against a small country, would be prompted to enhance defensive capabilities for a future U.S./NATO intervention... [N]ations in a position of strategic inferiority throughout the world community [would] redouble their efforts to acquire sophisticated weaponry." Cross (2001), p. 27.

The bombing of the Chinese embassy provided the occasion for Chenomyrdin to visit China, have both countries publicly condemn NATO's "hegemonial policies," and pledge to counter NATO's attempt to consolidate "what they termed a unipolar world order."<sup>11</sup> The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept – the first under president Vladimir Putin – introduced a new premise for Russian defense, that "there is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States."<sup>12</sup> Following the war, Jacques Chirac asserted that he saw a multipolar world, and later reiterated, "any community with only one dominant power is always a dangerous one and provokes reactions. That's why I favor a multipolar world in which Europe obviously has a place."<sup>13</sup>

The military imbalance revealed by U.S. capabilities in the Kosovo War was central to European and Russian understandings of unipolarity. U.S. military capabilities were essential in making the intervention in Kosovo possible, and especially making the type of intervention undertaken (a precision bombing air campaign with no ground invasion force) possible. Europe was painfully aware of its own inability to act without the United States and its *de facto* junior-partner status within the alliance. Russia was faced with internal problems of its own in Chechnya (and an economic stabilization dependent on IMF loans), and understood it could not afford a military confrontation with NATO over Kosovo.

The military gap between the United States and its wealthy European allies became painfully obvious to European generals and political leaders over the course of the Kosovo crisis.

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<sup>11</sup> Nichol (1999), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Cross (2001), p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> Posen (2006), p. 166. Press-Barnathan (2006), p. 292.

The United States provided three quarters of the 1,100 planes used in the attacks, a greater percentage of the 23,000 bombs and missiles, and almost the entirety of the 7,000 precision-guided munitions and cruise missiles. Almost all of the targets were identified using U.S. intelligence assets. The United States flew more than 60% of all the sorties, and more than 90% of all intelligence and reconnaissance missions and electronic warfare missions. As a senior German diplomat observed, “Kosovo was two or three times too big for us.” While collectively spending about two-thirds the amount that the U.S. did on defense, European armies were qualitatively different – mostly territorial defense through conscription – and more difficult to coordinate in swift, joint action.<sup>14</sup>

Europeans realized a credibility gap existed between their sanctions, which not only failed to stop Milošević from beginning the process of ethnic cleansing but that many European states and corporations actively skirted,<sup>15</sup> and the United States’ willingness to use its cutting edge precision-guided weaponry to put force behind its demands. This credibility gap gave the United States the ability to force a decision in NATO internal deliberations and to commit the alliance as a whole in negotiations. The unique leadership role played by the United States in European security was still similar to the role it played in leading and organizing European countries when NATO was founded. The United States’ engagement in Europe still obviated the need for Germany to fill any European void in leadership and resources, and U.S. presence reassured the newest NATO members in Eastern Europe.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Daalder & O’Hanlon (1999), p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> For example, in late 1998, the French were circumventing the EU sanctions to assist a French investor’s bid to purchase a Serbian cement works. Gutman (1999), p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Pond (1999), pp. 79–82. Daalder & O’Hanlon (1999), p. 136. Press-Barnathan (2006), p. 279.



The European reaction to this clear imbalance was mixed. In the short term the imbalance spurred a greater European commitment of troops and resources to the post-conflict peacekeeping; Europe supplied five times as many troops as the U.S. Further, Europe took primary responsibility for the modernization and reconstruction of the Balkans through the EU.<sup>17</sup> Later European compensations for the military imbalance included efforts to strengthen their ability to act jointly through a common foreign and security policy and the establishment of a European rapid-reaction force capable of independently contributing to European security while still interoperable with NATO forces. This move was interpreted variously as an effort to strengthen the transatlantic alliance by being able to pull their own weight, an assertion of independence and soft-balancing, a competitive initiative aiming at emancipation from U.S. hegemony, and an opening for Russia to create direct operational links with an autonomous European force.<sup>18</sup>

Russia's military weakness over the course of the 1990s became increasingly apparent both to Russia and to the Western powers.<sup>19</sup> NATO's intervention was widely interpreted

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<sup>17</sup> Pond (1999), pp. 80, 82–83. Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), p. 137. Friedrich, Ischinger and Scharping (2000), p. 46. Press-Barnathan (2006), p. 293.

<sup>18</sup> Hubert Védrine, the French Foreign Minister who coined '*hyperpuissance*' to describe the full-spectrum hegemony of the sole remaining superpower, was the unlikely defender of continued U.S.–European security cooperation saying, "one must not argue in terms of competition between Europe and the United States," when facing criticism from leftists and Gaullists over Kosovo. Rodman (1999), pp. 46–48. Pond (1999), pp. 80, 82–84. Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), pp. 137–139. Friedrich, Ischinger and Scharping (2000), pp. 39, 41–42, 45, 46. Posen (2006), pp. 151, 159, 164, 166–167, 170–171, 174–175, 182–183. Press-Barnathan (2006), pp. 273, 293. Fettweis (2004), p. 93. Arbatova (2001), p. 76. Rontoyanni (2002), pp. 814, 816, 819.

<sup>19</sup> The collapse of the USSR created a difficult process of recovering Soviet military assets from the former SSRs, and the phased withdrawal of troops from Central and Eastern Europe. Interventions into Russia's near abroad – Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia – were ultimately unsustainable both because of a general lack of resources and because of the First Chechen War. The Russian military had to drop its plans for a 2 million-man army as their resource constraints became clearer. The 20-month war with the Chechens required the mobilization of every reserve available, drained further resources, and accelerated the political decline of the military within Russia. Drastic cuts to the military budget followed, and attempts at military reform found little political or financial backing from the state, especially after the 1998 ruble crisis. Baev (1999), pp. 81–84. Baranovsky (2000), p. 448.

within Russia highlighting Russia's political, military, and economic weakness. Russia attempted military exercises and deployments to signal its concern, and the legislature called for larger military budgets, but these actions did more to highlight Russian military unpreparedness than resolve.<sup>20</sup> The West-99 military exercises, conducted in June 1999, were the largest held in a decade. Although it was planned before Kosovo, its scenarios were revised in light of the NATO intervention, featuring an attack from an unspecified alliance against Belarus and western Russia. Economic constraints made the purchase of major upgrades to Russian military capability infeasible (the IMF and World Bank established tight limits on the Russian defense budget in light of the Second War in Chechnya), so in the short term they increased their reliance on nuclear weapons and strengthened their military alliances with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan by conducting joint exercises.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike the Cold War, counterintervention was never a serious option for Russia, despite domestic political calls for military aid to the Serbians. A Duma resolution in March 1999 called for humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia, support for "volunteers," accelerating CIS integration, and suspending START II ratification and Russian ties to NATO. An earlier version of the resolution had even advocated deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus. Later the same month, the Federation Council and Duma both called upon the government to send arms to Yugoslavia. And in April, the Duma endorsed Yugoslavia joining the Russia-Belarus union.<sup>22</sup> But, while START II ratification and relations with NATO did get suspended, no political integration was pursued to give Yugoslavia cover, and sending

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<sup>20</sup> Nichol (1999), pp. 4, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 135–136, 139.

<sup>22</sup> Nichol (1999), p. 2. Mendeloff (2008), pp. 32, 43.

volunteers or arms was ever seriously considered. Russia's sole military maneuver was to send an intelligence collection vessel to the Adriatic.<sup>23</sup> Strobe Talbott revealed that, "Russians were told that any help they might give to Milošević would have a devastating effect on U.S.-Russian relations, and of course, the money came from [us]."<sup>24</sup>

The closest Russia and NATO came to a confrontation was at Priština's Slatina airport at the conclusion of the Kosovo War. Two hundred Russian paratroopers seized Slatina airport, doing so to guarantee a Russian role in KFOR before the rules governing participation had actually been negotiated. This was apparently an act of assertiveness on the part of the Defense Ministry and General Staff, circumventing the Foreign Ministry, but approved by Yeltsin. By creating facts on the ground, NATO would be faced with a choice of accepting those facts or risking a military confrontation. But rather than become a deadlock over territory and zones—British Lt. General Michael Jackson disobeyed an order from General Wesley Clark to confront and block the Russian paratroopers—the standoff was quickly diffused. Russian reinforcements did not arrive, and it seems that Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian airspace would have been closed to them. Russia gave up the possibility of having a 10,000 troop contingent controlling the two predominantly Serbian provinces in Kosovo, and instead accepted deployment of their 3,600 troops throughout Kosovo within the American, British, French, and German sectors, albeit with a role in KFOR that was enhanced compared to IFOR/SFOR. Yeltsin played the race to the airport by the "Heroes of Priština" for domestic political advantage against his opponents, and promoted the officer who led the march on Priština, Viktor Zavarzin, to three star general. Yeltsin proclaimed that this event served notice

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<sup>23</sup> Hosmer (2001), p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> Sulejmanović (2008), p. 53.

to the world that “Russia should be taken seriously,” and that Russia had shown what it could do despite NATO’s military might. The chairman of the Duma’s foreign affairs similarly framed it in terms of pride and decisiveness: “Russia has lately shown indecision in crisis situations. Now the whole world has seen that we can act brilliantly when all seems lost.” However, Yeltsin did not press the initial advantage gained in Priština any further, because doing so would have benefited the Russian Communist Party the most; they had become the standard bearers of Slavic and Orthodox identity in Russian domestic politics, and a nationalist fervor would work against Yeltsin.<sup>25</sup> Ultimately, Russia accepted a role in the post-conflict arrangements that did not include control over its own zone, being offered instead membership in the renamed G-8. This result reflected Russian military weakness and economic dependence on the West for continuing IMF loans.<sup>26</sup>

All relevant leaders in Europe acknowledged the unipolar distribution of power, even as some desired a return to multipolarity. The military imbalance clearly affected European self-perceptions regarding their ability to secure their region, and it profoundly reinforced a sense of diplomatic ineffectiveness within NATO and in Europe more broadly. The result was European diplomatic maneuvers to frustrate the unilateral use of force by the United States, and to attempt to retain veto powers over U.S. actions by influencing the choice of involved institutions. For Russia, the stark military imbalance was an unwelcome reminder of their post-

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<sup>25</sup> “General Boris Gromov who has a reputation of a tough ‘patriot,’ a hero of Communist resistance to Yeltsyn in 1993, voiced the opinion echoing that of Yeltsyn and of the ‘patriots.’ ‘The policy of Russia must be principled and firm. We will not accept NATO in the role of the World’s policeman.’ However went on Gromov, providing military assistance to Yugoslavia would imply a return to the Cold War, which was unacceptable. This political stance was hardly distinguishable from that of Yeltsyn’s: tough rhetoric and no action.” Brovkin (2009), pp. 15–16.

<sup>26</sup> Mandelbaum (1999), p. 7. Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 125, 138. Stepanova (2000), pp. 224–225. Arbatov (2000), p. 11. Hosmer (2001), p. 44. Arbatova (2001), pp. 69–71. Cross (2001), pp. 15–17. Sulejmanović (2008), pp. 65–69. Brovkin (2009), p. 26–32.

Soviet fall from power, and although there was domestic demand for it, a counterintervention to support Milošević was never considered feasible.

### *DISINTEREST, DISENGAGEMENT, DISARRAY*

The theory expects that unipolarity will feature a different core–periphery relationship than multipolarity and bipolarity. The latter two distributions of power, because they feature inherent core conflict, are politically engaged in the periphery as an object in the balance of power. But within unipolarity the core and periphery are politically dis-integrated, because there is no intra-core balancing. There is no rival great power attempting to attract and close off peripheral countries, so the sole superpower perceives lower stakes in the outcomes of events in the periphery, since threats to the (im)balance of power are more about future potential than actual losses. The political disengagement of the unipolar power from the periphery manifests in a vague and diffuse conception of its interests, a lack of sustained attention paid to the peripheries, the ability to be sloppy in its strategy and planning (in the absence of high stakes or counterintervention), and ambiguity toward the settlement being sought through intervention.

#### **Universalist, diffuse interests**

The shift to unipolarity led to a fundamental reordering of U.S. priorities in international relations. The margin of military power between the United States and the next closest rival (especially in the late 1990s) was so great that traditional security concerns – great power conflicts, threats to national survival, imminent threats to regional interests – declined in relevance. What then captured the attentions were the “remainder” interests: contingencies, indirect threats to U.S. interests, humanitarian causes. Tony Blair championed Kosovo as a war that could be forthrightly described as just and humanitarian, precisely because it was not strategically located, had no strategic resources (oil), and had no exclusive cultural connections

with the intervening powers—Britain and the United States had no intrinsic interests in Kosovo whatsoever.<sup>27</sup> Kissinger argued that, “the proposed deployment in Kosovo does not deal with any threat to American security as this concept has traditionally been conceived... If Kosovo presents a security problem, it is to Europe.”<sup>28</sup>

As the sole remaining superpower, the United States began to identify a large overlap between the necessities of the world order and its own interests. The United States perceived disorder in the peripheries as a threat to the order itself, and America not only provided the public goods that sustained the order, it identified with the order.<sup>29</sup> Steven Redd argues that the Clinton administration explicitly justified humanitarian intervention with the fact that the U.S. was the sole remaining superpower capable of intervening on behalf of threatened minorities.<sup>30</sup> But because of the more diffuse interests at stake in civil wars around the world – humanitarianism, notions of world order, indirect interests – United States policy makers perceived the public as being less willing to accept casualties from interventions, a perception that would play a profound role in shaping the NATO intervention into Kosovo (discussed in detail below).<sup>31</sup> Lacking intrinsic interests, U.S. commitment was uncertain, leading policymakers to question whether the United States would resent supplying three quarters of the planes for a mission that Europe should have led.<sup>32</sup>

### **Inattention, unwillingness to lead**

U.S. lack of leadership regarding Kosovo was both a continuation of its behavior toward Bosnia. Failure to lead during Bosnia became an example used in internal policy debates

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<sup>27</sup> Pond (1999), pp. 78–79.

<sup>28</sup> Press-Barnathan (2006), p. 293.

<sup>29</sup> Nye Jr. (1999), pp. 26–28.

<sup>30</sup> Redd (2005), p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Nye Jr. (1999), p. 32. Mandelbaum (1999), p. 5. Barthe & David (2007), p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Pond (1999), p. 79. Mowle & Sacko (2007), p. 604.

(principally by Secretary Albright) to overcome opposition on the part of other cabinet members toward action in Kosovo.<sup>33</sup> America's lack of insistence on the treatment of Kosovo stemmed from the Dayton agreement ending the Bosnian War. Kosovo was not included on the agenda at Dayton, in part because Holbrooke and the other negotiators did not want to alienate Milošević, whose acquiescence and cooperation was needed for the success of Dayton.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the mounting Kosovo crisis, Clinton avoided directly dealing with Kosovo unless he was forced to do so, and ignored the possibility of war until the Rambouillet peace talks. Clinton's impeachment proceedings certainly played a role in his inattention, and resulted in Clinton being absent from several key meetings in which decisions were made about threatening Milošević with air strikes. For example, following the Račak massacre in January 1999, Albright presented a plan at a White House meeting – in which Clinton was absent due to the scandal – calling for air strikes against Milošević unless he agreed to a peace plan.<sup>35</sup> Presidential historian Michael Beschloss concludes that, "Clinton was very affected by the view that Americans do not care about foreign affairs." When he gave a speech to the nation in March 1999, subsequent polling showed a 15% drop in public support for his handling of foreign affairs. As such, Clinton generally did not act in international politics until it was

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<sup>33</sup> In 1995, NATO participation in Bosnia was done without strong U.S. leadership, and was instead guided by the UN and undertaken principally by Europe. Gen. Odom criticized the U.S. at the time as a timid, feckless, unserious, passive complainer unwilling to commit significant forces and "destroying NATO's credibility as Europe's security cornerstone." Odom (1995), pp. 155, 160, 164. The administration had to take on significant domestic political risk from congressional isolationists to finally intervene. Further, it had to abandon its inclination to avoid using military force and its reticence to organize the Europeans. Warren Christopher had initially offered Clinton a "lift and strike" option in 1993, but it would have required a "raw power approach" of simply telling the Europeans that the United States had decided on a course of action and that the U.S. expected them to support it. Clinton decided against it, and intervention would wait for another two years. Bass (1998), pp. 97, 98–99.

<sup>34</sup> Caplan (1998), p. 750.

<sup>35</sup> Redd (2005), pp. 141–142.

necessary and politically expedient—one senior military officer on the NSC staff said that, “Clinton vacillates a lot because of political capital he does not have and has never had.”<sup>36</sup>

In February 1999, the United States turned over chairmanship of the negotiations to the French and British at Rambouillet, even though they had initially been critical of the United States for taking the side of the Kosovar Albanians, had a significant track record of appeasing Milošević, and blocked NATO from having its own representative at the talks. One observer commented that, “the American role in the negotiations seemed decidedly secondary to that of the French, British, and, most astonishingly, the Russians.”<sup>37</sup> Finally, following the Kosovo War, the United States turned over administration of post-conflict Kosovo to the British, French, Germans, and Italians, abrogating any influence over the political and economic reconstruction of the territory that its military effort might have won.<sup>38</sup>

### **Lack of planning, strategy**

Just as the United States was politically disengaged from Yugoslavia before and after the Kosovo War, lack of strategic action, planning, and formulating clear political goals characterized the U.S. approach during the prosecution of the war. Earlier in Bosnia, the Clinton administration had accidentally committed itself to the introduction of ground forces without realizing it.<sup>39</sup> With Kosovo, the administration committed itself to bombing without

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<sup>36</sup> Senator McCain specifically criticized Clinton’s disengagement from the talks on 25 March 1999, “I’ve never heard a President do what he did a couple weeks ago. He allowed two deadlines to pass when he said there would be action, unless deadlines were met.” Redd (2005), pp. 136–137.

<sup>37</sup> Gutman (1999), p. 13. Bellamy (2001), p. 40. Marc Weller, and international lawyer working with the Albanian delegation during the talks, argued instead that the behavior of the Contact Group before and after the talks was a sign of a challenge by Europe (principally France and Russia) to the notion of a unipolar world dominated by the United States. Sulejmanović (2008), p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> Gutman (1999), pp. 13–14.

<sup>39</sup> A State Department study concluded that senior foreign policy officials, including Richard Holbrooke and President Clinton, were shocked and surprised to learn that U.S. troops had been committed to Bosnia by an earlier presidential decision. This late-1994 decision was not made through a formal process of deliberation and



having forces ready for a bombing campaign, without a plan to deal with ethnic cleansing refugees, and without a clear coercive strategy toward Milošević or even a clear set of political outcomes being sought.

There was little preparation to engage in a bombing campaign in the event that Milošević refused to cooperate at Rambouillet, and there was seemingly no plan or strategy in place if Milošević did not back down after a brief bombing campaign.<sup>40</sup> Until Rambouillet visibly failed, it was widely assumed in NATO capitals that the threats made against Milošević would not have to be carried out.<sup>41</sup> Italian Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema asked President Clinton if there was a plan in case the air campaign failed, to which Clinton reportedly had no answer, turning to National Security Adviser Sandy Berger who said, "We will continue bombing."<sup>42</sup>

In the belief that Milošević would give in quickly once bombing began, only three days of targets were generated by NATO planners for the air campaign.<sup>43</sup> Albright stated at the

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presidential approval of a memorandum, but was made more by bureaucratic inertia. The decision indicated that if UNPROFOR's peacekeeping mission could no longer be carried out due to a chaotic situation on the ground, that NATO would assist UNPROFOR in leaving the country safely. Op-plan 40104 had 20,000 U.S. troops committed to a NATO extraction force of 60,000. Following the massacres at Srebrenica and Žepa in July 1995, European members of UNPROFOR indicated that they would begin pulling out. The administration believed that reneging on their commitment to send ground troops to assist the evacuation would be a critical blow to NATO. Bass (1998), pp. 99–101, 104–105.

<sup>40</sup> Judah (1999), pp. 6, 14. Kay (2000), p. 73. Henriksen (2008), p. 826.

<sup>41</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 109.

<sup>42</sup> Kay (2000), p. 74. Redd (2005), p. 142.

<sup>43</sup> Commander of NATO's Air Forces in Southern Europe, U.S. Air Force Lt. General Michael Short admitted, "we had no [military] strategy because three nights of demonstration of resolve does not require strategy." Leader of the targeting cell, Wing Commander Sean Corbett, said that the targeting cell found the instructions so inadequate that they at first thought a political deal had already been struck with Milošević, and then without guidance on what to achieve developed their own objectives and strategy for their targeting. Corbett went on to say that their only guidance they imputed from media briefs made by the NATO military spokesman on CNN. Henriksen (2008), pp. 831, 834. Kay (2000), p. 73. Barthe & David (2007), p. 95.

beginning, “I think this is... achievable within a relatively short period of time.”<sup>44</sup> But without effective military planning and operations, it appeared early on that NATO might lose the war. U.S. intelligence warned that without a ground campaign NATO could not effectively deter further ethnic cleansing, and that the air campaign would likely exacerbate the refugee crisis. Yet few preparations for refugees were made; efforts focused on emergency relief instead.<sup>45</sup>

The initial three days of bombing were done in the absence of a clear military and political strategy for what the bombing was supposed to accomplish. What resulted was high-level military personnel, ambassadors, and politicians then debated, recommended, and vetoed targets. Their criteria were often more about maintaining NATO cohesion than what the target’s strategic effect on Milošević or the FRY would be. An anonymous NATO ambassador admitted, “We were more worried about how our actions were playing to public opinion in our own capitals rather than analyzing the impact on Milošević and his regime.”<sup>46</sup> Barry Posen assessed the campaign and also concluded that NATO began the war without a strategy linking bombing to the actual interdiction of Serbian forces as they expelled Kosovar Albanians. Over the course of the intervention, NATO bombing never had an operational effect on Serbian tactical freedom. Without an answer to Serbian operations in Kosovo, the bombing campaign expanded to Serbian infrastructure in order to force Milošević’s surrender.<sup>47</sup>

In retrospect, it appears that NATO began the campaign not just without a military strategy, but also without a political strategy for the military operations to work toward. There were no explicit objectives given to commanders and there was no clear post-war vision for the

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<sup>44</sup> Mandelbaum (1999), p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Kay (2000), p. 73–74.

<sup>46</sup> Henriksen (2008), p. 832.

<sup>47</sup> Posen (2000), p. 66. Arbatov (2000), p. 14.

political outcome for Kosovo. Without a political objective, detailed strategic planning was not possible, and the threat posed by the bombing was not initially credible or effective.<sup>48</sup>

### **Detachment from the outcome**

The negotiated outcome for the FRY and Kosovo is further evidence illustrating U.S. disengagement and disinterest. One of the more paradoxical elements of the intervention was the agreement between the West, Europe, and Russia that the territorial integrity of the FRY had to be upheld and that the intervention could not further the secessionist agenda of the KLA. This led to the odd alignment of forces in which NATO fought against Milošević despite both (at least rhetorically) being committed to preventing Kosovar independence. Among the members of the Contact Group, the United States was the most ambiguous about the precise provisions of the plan for Kosovo's future status, preferring to focus on the military aspects and leave the political issues for the Europeans.<sup>49</sup>

The alliance delayed intervening until after Rambouillet, because it did not want to be seen as giving support to secession, and at Rambouillet made extra diplomatic efforts to get the KLA representatives to sign onto a plan that did not guarantee their independence (after the

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<sup>48</sup> Dag Henriksen noted that it took NATO "about a week to address the distinct lack of an adequate political strategy for the air campaign, and ...close to a month to formally agree on the objectives for OAF." Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Ralston admitted: "Was there a proper political strategy prior to the bombing? I would agree that there probably was not. People had some vague idea – they wanted to stop the killing and the violence and the brutality – but that is too fuzzy for what you need in terms of coming up with a political strategy and the military strategy we're dealing with. I don't think that had been thought through."

Chief of Staff at SHAPE General Dieter Stöckman similarly admitted, "From the outset, we were never given a political long-term vision for an intended end-state within the Balkans and what the status for Kosovo should be once the war was over. It obviously was not thought through politically when the war started." French Chief of Defense General Jean-Pierre Kelche said, "there was no political direction in the beginning – absent. Gradually the military strategy improved, but in the beginning, it was a mess."

Regarding the military strategy, General Wesley Clark explained, "In the case of Kosovo, there simply was no detailed planning. There was no strategic consensus in Washington... Detailed NATO planning would have required political authorization that just wasn't possible... In Europe and the United States, repeated political concerns inhibited the kind of detailed NATO planning in the summer and fall of 1998 that might have promoted a more credible and more effective threat." Henriksen (2008), pp. 828–830.

<sup>49</sup> Bellamy (2000), pp. 106–107.

KLA initially rejected it, just as Milošević's negotiators had). It is hard to evaluate whether the United States was credulous in believing that the KLA would be willing to give up their *raison d'être* commitment to independence, or if the United States was only rhetorically committed to FRY sovereignty. The latter interpretation is even more confused by the concessions NATO made to Milošević when negotiating the end of the war, making changes to the wording of the status of Kosovo that were friendlier than the terms offered to him at Rambouillet.<sup>50</sup>

At the settlement of the Kosovo War, the West made four major concessions to Milošević compared to the terms offered at Rambouillet. First, the UN was given primary direction of the post-conflict administration of Kosovo, giving Russia and China a veto over Kosovo's future. Second, the self-government of Kosovo had to take into account the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" and no mention of any process that could lead to the independence of Kosovo. Third, Russian participation in KFOR was assured (in part as a trade-off for the withdrawal of all Serbian forces from Kosovo). Fourth, the status-of-forces agreement stipulation granting NATO free movement throughout the whole of FRY (included in Appendix B of the Rambouillet) was removed.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to understand how NATO, once it had used its substantial military force to bring Milošević back to the negotiating table, would agree to terms that were lesser than

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<sup>50</sup> Mandelbaum (1999), pp. 4–5.

<sup>51</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 117. Posen (2000), pp. 76–77, 79–80. Hosmer (2001), pp. xxi, 116–118. Milošević was able to use these concessions to declare that Serbia had emerged victorious in its standoff with NATO:

The Belgrade agreement has closed the open issues of the possible independence of Kosovo at the time prior to the aggression. The territorial entirety of our country cannot be threatened. We have persevered and succeeded in defending the country because we brought the entire problem to the summit of the world authority—the United Nations—and handed its resolution to be sought under UN auspices and in keeping with the UN Charter. The international forces being deployed in Kosovo with the task of equally ensuring the safety of all citizens will be under UN auspices, as will be the political process, which will be based on the principles which stem from previously conducted discussions, but are also equally based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country. This means that only autonomy, and nothing else outside that, can be mentioned in this political process.

those they demanded at Rambouillet before the war. The final agreement altered the two provisions that had been unacceptable to Milošević at Rambouillet: Russian peacekeepers would be present in Kosovo, rather than solely NATO forces, and the provision for free movement of NATO forces throughout the FRY was removed. The specific outcome in FRY seemed not to matter as much as one would expect, in retrospect making Milošević's intransigence at Rambouillet appear to be a questionable motivation for the intervention.

Unipolarity allows for the political disengagement of the superpower. This disengagement manifests in a number of ways: adopting diffuse or universalist conceptions of its interests, inability to keep focused attention, and lacking disciplined planning or strategizing, and detachment from the negotiated settlement. The Kosovo War satisfied no intrinsic interest held by the United States, the United States displayed inattention and a willingness to let Europeans and even Russians drive the diplomatic process in several instances including the negotiated settlement, and when the U.S. decided to intervene it did so without preparation and without an articulated political goal that the military could work toward.

#### *EXTRINSIC INTERESTS: STAKES IN CONFLICT & VALUE OF ALLIES*

Unipolarity also structures the interests of external powers considering the stakes of an internal war. External powers were centrally focused on whether or not a NATO intervention in Kosovo would occur and what a NATO intervention would imply. The place of the alliance in the diplomatic process and in the actual prosecution of the intervention was subject to maneuvering by both the United States and the Europeans, determining to what degree the alliance would function as a constraint on the sole remaining superpower. The use of NATO outside of a clear threat to the security of a member country was a major shock to Russia—NATO cooperation and to Russian perceptions of national security, ultimately shaping their

diplomatic strategy in support of Milošević. Humanitarianism was also important in motivating and justifying the intervention, but there is significant evidence that humanitarian concerns were compromised when deciding on the means used for the intervention.

### **NATO Credibility**

The United States' principal motivating interest was not intrinsic to Kosovo, rather its major incentive was derivative or extrinsic: "to avoid humiliation as the West's guarantor of last resort and prevent the disintegration of NATO's core of future coalitions of the willing."<sup>52</sup> The United States aimed to preserve NATO as a functional alliance and the cornerstone of European security. Because Kosovo was a major concern to Europe, and Europe could not intervene on its own, Kosovo became important to the United States.<sup>53</sup>

Joseph Nye estimated that if the United States were to demur following the calls from Britain, France, and Germany for intervention, it would have resulted in a NATO crisis on the level of the 1956 Suez invasion.<sup>54</sup> The inability of NATO states, individually or collectively, to effectively address the crisis after crisis within the former Yugoslavia affected the credibility of the organization as a security provider. Because of its poor track record, NATO states perceived the value of acting together as superseding their individual disagreements over Kosovo policy.<sup>55</sup>

From 1998 on, NATO made rhetorical commitments and threats of force, and sponsoring agreements between the various involved parties, which put its credibility on the line. Open violation of those agreements and flouting NATO threats were a serious test of

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<sup>52</sup> Pond (1999), p. 79.

<sup>53</sup> Pond (1999), p. 79. Mowle & Sacko (2007), p. 604.

<sup>54</sup> Nye Jr. (1999), p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 104.

NATO credibility to deter and to secure.<sup>56</sup> On the one hand, failing to intervene posed a risk to NATO's credibility, but the intervention itself also strained NATO's future by exposing internal rifts that threatened the political consensus on war fighting and values promotion. But risking internal dissention was the lesser of two evils for NATO as an organization, for if it failed to intervene its credibility would have been devastated, eroded as it was by delaying engagement and intervention for so long.<sup>57</sup>

NATO spent several years exhorting the former Yugoslavia to cease ethnic cleansing before finally intervening in Bosnia in 1995 after 250,000 Bosnian Muslims had already perished. In 1992, the Bush Sr. administration warned, "In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the U.S. will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and Serbia proper." In March 1998, Albright stated that, "we are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia," and in August, "the ongoing Serbian offensive and the unacceptable actions that have taken place in the context of that offensive only increase the chances of there being military action by NATO." But NATO refrained from intervention from March 1998 through March 1999 despite escalating Serbian attacks within Kosovo and hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanian refugees. There is evidence that Milošević did not take the threat of NATO bombing seriously. President of Montenegro Milo Djukanović attended a meeting with Milošević in Fall 1998 following UNSCR 1199. When the Army Chief of Staff of Yugoslavia asserted that NATO would bomb the FRY if they did not comply with the resolution, Milošević responded, "So what? First they bomb, and

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<sup>56</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 108. Redd (2005), p. 131. Henriksen (2008), p. 836.

<sup>57</sup> Kay (2000), pp. 71–72.

then peace resumes. They bomb us for about 5–7 days, and then the international community mobilizes. NATO is forced to stop their actions, and we become the moral winners.”<sup>58</sup>

A September 1998 NATO demand that Milošević cease his attacks in Kosovo produced a slowdown in his campaign, but four months later the massacre at Račak occurred. The massacre was not enough to prompt an intervention, but rather occasioned the talks at Rambouillet. When Rambouillet ended without Serbian agreement, Tony Blair told the House of Commons, “To walk away now would destroy NATO’s credibility.”<sup>59</sup> The British Defence Committee’s Fourteenth Report later summarized the situation: “Once NATO had threatened the use of force to resolve the crisis, so Milošević’s defiance provoked further threats and increasingly it was felt that the Alliance’s credibility needed to be defended.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Changing Relationship with NATO**

The effect of unipolarity created a seemingly paradoxical U.S. relationship toward NATO: engaging in an intervention it had no intrinsic interests in with the purpose of keeping the NATO alliance vital; but, refusing to countenance international checks on NATO’s ability to act, or even NATO checks on the U.S. ability to act. The change in the sole remaining superpower’s orientation toward the alliance was significant. NATO’s military utility to the United States was diminished, but the political role the alliance could play was extremely important: consolidating the gains of the Cold War victory, enabling the domestic

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<sup>58</sup> Henriksen (2008), pp. 837–838.

<sup>59</sup> Kay (2000), pp. 72–73. Bekaj (2010), p. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Henriksen (2008), p. 840.



transformation of Eastern Europe, and providing the United States a continuing foothold on the continent.<sup>61</sup>

The United States began to change its relationship toward NATO with the end of the Cold War and NATO expansion. Mikhail Gorbachev believed that he had been promised no NATO expansion into Eastern Europe following the end of the Cold War. Yet, NATO did just that in 1999 with the admission of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. When Russia felt cheated, the United States gave them three assurances: that the alliance was transforming into a primarily political organization for the promotion of democracy and free markets; that NATO's remaining military mission would be strictly defensive; and, that Russia would be a full participant in the architecture of European security.<sup>62</sup> Almost immediately thereafter, NATO was put to use in offensive capacity against Serbia over the objections of Russia. But the assurances Clinton gave Russia should not be viewed simply as a placating lie or bluff—the United States was changing its perception of NATO's utility, treating it more as a political organization and resisting any checks that it might place on its use of force.

European diplomacy attempted to constrain NATO during the process of dealing with Kosovo. For example, Weller argues that the French and German push for negotiations in Rambouillet was an assertion of Europe's ability to sort out its own problems without the kind of decisiveness that the U.S. exercised in Dayton to resolve Bosnia. France, like Russia, tried to preserve its international influence by attempting to keep decision making situated in the UNSC and not NATO. French Foreign Minister Hubert Védérine also attempted to place

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<sup>61</sup> Brzezinski (1997), Chapter 3. Events subsequent to Kosovo would demonstrate convincingly the nature of the shift from military to political: despite the first invocation of Article V in the alliance's history following 9/11, NATO allies played a minimal role in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, while the United States retained a political beachhead in Europe due to the strong support of Eastern (or "New") Europe at a time when Western ("Old") Europe was working against U.S. foreign policy. In almost every case, NATO enlargement through the 2000s preceded admission to the European Union. The alliance served as a guarantee of Eastern European political consolidation.

<sup>62</sup> Mandelbaum (1999), p. 7.

NATO under the political jurisdiction of the Contact Group for the purposes of the Rambouillet negotiations, which would give Russia and France a veto. European complaints about the lack of a UN mandate for the intervention – despite knowing that Russia or China would veto any such resolution – were an implicit attempt to keep constraints on the ability of the U.S. to act alone.<sup>63</sup>

The prosecution of the war itself sidelined the Europeans, driving home the limitations of European military power as perceived by the United States. The NATO command structure ran the war nominally, but the United States relied more on the EUCOM structure. European officers were excluded from tactical planning involving the stealth aircraft, while American commanders complained that the rest of the air attack planning was being micromanaged by North Atlantic Council civilians (although the U.S. was circumventing them by hitting targets that had not been discussed with the Alliance).<sup>64</sup>

During the intervention, the United States bristled at the political constraints NATO allies imposed upon warfighting and signaled more than once that it wanted to or was willing to circumvent NATO to achieve a victory. Constraints on planning and operations hindered the efficiency and effectiveness of the intervention, causing commanders and U.S. officials to grate against the alliance. NATO military officials sought authorization to update their war plans from mid-1998 in case the air campaign was unsuccessful, but their request was rejected. Some senior U.S. military officials suggested that they would have preferred that NATO not be involved in the war at all, but simply serve as a mandating organization for a coalition of the willing. In a June 1999 meeting, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger stated that Milošević

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<sup>63</sup> Weller (1999), p. 212. Rodman (1999), p. 48. Maull (2000), p. 3. Bellamy (2000), p. 107.

<sup>64</sup> Posen (2006), pp. 176, 178.

would be defeated with whatever means necessary “in or outside NATO... a consensus in NATO is valuable. But it is not the *sine qua non*. We want to move with NATO, but it can’t prevent us from moving.” Similarly, Senator Gordon Smith, who was otherwise a supporter of NATO, warned, “a belief will arise in Congress and among the American people that but for NATO, we would not be in this fight and because of NATO we can’t win.”<sup>65</sup>

### **NATO & Russian Security**

Russia’s relationship with NATO was intimately tied up with its attempt to assert its continued status as a great power despite the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>66</sup> In this context, NATO’s intervention posed a surprising and existential threat for Russia. They viewed the West as having betrayed Russian trust regarding the role of NATO, they saw NATO (and the EU) as inspiring secessionist movements in the former USSR and Yugoslavia, and they feared that the high tech precision air war that NATO displayed over Kosovo could be used against Russia as well. The Russian role in resolving the Kosovo conflict therefore aimed at minimizing NATO’s role. Russia had few intrinsic interests in the former Yugoslavia: Serbia held little strategic importance, Milošević was not a valuable ally, and the ‘Slavic brotherhood’ myth had little weight outside of domestic political rhetoric.

While it pursued bilateral relations with European countries, preferring not to deal with the EU, Russia placed a high priority on its relations with NATO. Formal relationship structures between Russia and NATO were offered as a palliative following what Russia perceived as a betrayal when the NATO enlargement process began with Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. The 1997 NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council attempted to

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<sup>65</sup> Kay (2000), pp. 74–75, 77. Hosmer (2001), p. xxiv.

<sup>66</sup> Nichol (1999), p. 6. Sulejmanović (2008), pp. 7, 10, 30.

overcome the distrust sown by enlargement, and reassure Russia of its place in shaping European security. However, Russia's interests lay in preventing NATO from being the key institution of European security, instead favoring organizations where Russia had greater voice: the OSCE, UN, and even the Contact Group (see below for more on the politics of institutional predominance). And, Russia was still able to use its military to frustrate NATO's effective operations, for example when Russia deployed a battalion of peacekeepers to Sarajevo in 1994 in order to prevent NATO airstrikes against Bosnian Serbs.<sup>67</sup>

In the wake of the First Chechen War (1994–1996) and the series of Yugoslav secessionist civil wars, Russia was wary of any perceived support from the West for a principle of secession. The attractive pull of the EU and NATO was seen as fostering the drive to secede—as evidence, Russians pointed to the Baltic states, Slovenia, the Czech Republic jettisoning Slovakia, Republika Srpska, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya, Transdniestria, and even Kurdistan (recently protected by Operations Provide Comfort II and Northern Watch). Russian confidence in their military was profoundly shaken by the First Chechen War, while the assertion of NATO firepower in Southeastern Europe highlighted the extent of Russian insecurity since the collapse of the USSR.<sup>68</sup> And perhaps they were right to see the intervention in Kosovo as emboldening secessionist movements given that the Second Chechen War would begin two months after the termination of the Kosovo War.<sup>69</sup>

The Russian state's perception of the stakes in Kosovo had little to do with 'Slavic brotherhood' but instead were driven by their desire to prevent NATO from asserting itself as

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<sup>67</sup> Baev (1999), pp. 76–77, 84. Stepanova (2000), p. 210. Baranovsky (2000), p. 455. Brovkin (2009), p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> Baev does note that Russian military interventions in Transdniestria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia worked against Russia's position on territorial integrity. Baev (1999), pp. 74–76, 83–84. Nichol (1999), p. 4. Stepanova (2000), p. 211. Mendeloff (2008), p. 48.

<sup>69</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 131–132.

the central institution of European security, which would imply a diminished voice for Russia as a great power and a threat to maintaining a Russian sphere of influence.<sup>70</sup> If a precedent was established legitimizing intervention into secessionist conflicts, then in light of the Western criticism of Russia's handling of Chechnya, the same precedent could be used to justify NATO intervention into Russia itself ("Russia will be next" and "Today Yugoslavia—Tomorrow Russia").<sup>71</sup> For the first time since the mid-1980s, the Russian General Staff, Security Council, Foreign Ministry, and Duma had serious discussions about the possibility of military conflict with NATO.<sup>72</sup> Their perception was that despite the United States reframing NATO as a political organization, that NATO remained principally military in character and anti-Russian, serving to isolate Russia from European security decision-making.<sup>73</sup>

It is not clear the extent to which opposition to NATO intervention was symbolic more than substantive. In 1998, NATO threatened to bomb Belgrade to force Milošević to comply with UNSCR 1199. Holbrooke claimed that Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov tacitly communicated to him, "If you take it to the UN we'll veto it. If you don't we'll just denounce you... we'll just make a lot of noise." In public, Ivanov stated that Russia opposed NATO intervention because it would strengthen Milošević, and that Russian and NATO goals in Kosovo "and the differences, which also exist between [NATO] allies, are tactical."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Stepanova (2000), p. 208. Baranovsky (2000), p. 450. Arbatov (2000), p. 10. Mendeloff (2008), pp. 33, 38, 42–48. Sulejmanović (2008), p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> Commander of the Far East Military District Victor Chechevatov sent a letter to Yeltsin stating that, "The bombing of Yugoslavia could be a rehearsal resulting in similar strikes in the not too distant future on Russia." Cross (2001), pp. 10, 15. Baev (1999), pp. 87–88. Nichol (1999), p. 5. Antonenko (1999–2000), p. 124. Stepanova (2000), p. 214. Arbatov (2000), pp. 2, 17–18. Mendeloff (2008), p. 47.

<sup>72</sup> Arbatov (2000), p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 125–126. Baranovsky (2000), p. 446. Arbatov (2000), p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Crawford (2001–2002), pp. 510–511. Bellamy (2001), p. 41.

Yet, in the midst of the bombing campaign, Chernomyrdin demonized the role of NATO. In a May 1999 *Washington Post* editorial, he claimed that the world was the closest it had been in the 1990s to nuclear war, that all of the nuclear cooperation efforts would be suspended unless NATO ceased its airstrikes, and that states around the world would pursue nuclear proliferation to counter the threat of NATO intervention. He went further in asserting that Russia's stance was against NATO's goals of a NATO-dominated peacekeeping force and autonomy for Kosovo, preferring instead a UN peacekeeping force and Yugoslav territorial integrity. He also expected that the international community would force NATO to compensate the victims of its bombing and to punish its "criminal" commanders.<sup>75</sup>

According to Vladimir Baranovsky, the strikes on Kosovo had a greater effect on Russian anti-NATO sentiment than the bitter process of enlargement had. Russians resented that NATO decided to use force over their objections, but they did not place nearly as much blame for the Kosovo War on the European member states of NATO, seeing them as also having been pressured to be participants by the United States. Russia hoped that the European reaction to American hegemony would be to consolidate a European identity apart from a transatlantic identity, and to collectively create an independent military and foreign policy.<sup>76</sup>

Following the Kosovo War, Russia promulgated a new military doctrine based on their perception of the stakes and implications following from NATO's intervention. The National

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<sup>75</sup> Elements of nuclear cooperation included ratification of START II, theater missile defense, ABM Treaty revision, the Nunn-Lugar program, and export-controls. Nichol (1999), pp. 8, 10.

<sup>76</sup> Baranovsky (2000), p. 455. Rontoyanni (2002), pp. 813, 815. "There are no sharp security interest conflicts between Russia and EU. On the contrary, Russia and Europe share common security and foreign policy interests related to post-bipolar challenges of conflicts in the post-Communist space and the emergence of a new phenomenon, the Islamic dimension of European security. Furthermore, Russia does not perceive the European Union/Western European Union enlargement as a security threat (in contrast to NATO's enlargement). Both Russia and the EU are interested in stimulating multipolarity in world politics." Arbatova (2001), pp. 75–76.

Security Concept of 1997 had emphasized local conflicts along Russia's borders and internal upheaval from economic difficulties as the principal security threats. But the 1999 military doctrine radically revised the threat perception of Russia, which now prioritized: external intervention into Russia; attempts to marginalize Russian interests in international security problems; attempts to prevent Russia from becoming a pole in a multipolar world; weakening of the OSCE and UN, including interventions conducted without UN approval; external support for extremist ethno-nationalist, separatist, or paramilitary movements or groups; concentration of forces near Russia's borders; and, enlargement of military alliances at the expense of Russia and its allies. Although NATO was not explicitly named, it was clear what drove the reassessment of Russian military doctrine in the immediate wake of Kosovo.<sup>77</sup>

However, Russian relations with the West and NATO returned to normality by the end of 1999. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin stated that Russia would cooperate with NATO simply because Russia is part of the civilized world. Russian participation in the Partnership for Peace and SFOR returned to normal, while there was no disruption in Russia's participation in KFOR. Further, Putin pushed through the ratification of START II and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as well as signaling readiness for further arms control measures.<sup>78</sup>

### **Humanitarianism**

During bipolarity, humanitarian intervention was difficult if not impossible to justify given the mutual suspicions on both sides of the Cold War that any "humanitarian" justification was simply a gloss for the pursuit of strategic interests.<sup>79</sup> Humanitarian intervention became possible with the end of the Cold War and the proclamation of a 'new

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<sup>77</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), p. 134. Arbatov (2000), Appendices A & B.

<sup>78</sup> Antonenko (1999–2000), p. 137. Baranovsky (2000), p. 457. Rontoyanni (2002), pp. 817–818.

<sup>79</sup> Finnemore (2003), pp. 73–83.

world order' by Mikhail Gorbachev and George Bush Sr. The doctrine of a 'responsibility to protect' was emerging in international legal thought alongside humanitarian interventions in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia and the failure to intervene in Rwanda. Kosovo was another conflict rhetorically justified as a humanitarian intervention, aiming to protect the Kosovar Albanians from ethnic cleansing. While it is certain that the perilous position of the Kosovars was a major motivation for continued Western interest in the FRY, the empirical record points toward humanitarian concerns taking a back seat to NATO political cohesion and sustaining domestic support. The allies did not craft a joint humanitarian legal justification for the Kosovo War, nor did they make their case to the United Nations. The means chosen – an air campaign waged from 15,000 ft. – was clearly ineffective at stopping ethnic cleansing; rather it was the military option that produced the least discord between NATO members and least domestic political discontent.

The United States took action without the approval of the United Nations, although ostensibly upholding the principles of the United Nations and the international community. And while the U.S. was attempting to prevent another genocide from occurring, it did not justify the intervention using the UN's 1948 Genocide Convention. There was no collective NATO legal justification either; each member state was left to offer its own legal position. Most states did not reference humanitarian law scholarship, precedent, or prior state practice. When FRY brought a case to the ICJ against NATO states, instead of making a defense of principled humanitarianism, their defenses were technical and procedural and premised on Kosovo as an exceptional case.<sup>80</sup> This was the first time a major military intervention was

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<sup>80</sup> Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), p. 135. Roberts notes that there is some irony in the efforts undertaken by the United States to circumvent the International Criminal Court out of fear of political indictments targeting the



undertaken to implement a UNSCR without UNSC authorization, and the first major bombing campaign to attempt to stop a wholly internal conflict.<sup>81</sup> Sidestepping the UN and avoiding a Russian or Chinese veto prevented the loss of public support for an intervention in Kosovo that would have occurred had an authorization resolution failed. This was a significant shift for NATO as well, taking an alliance constructed for the defense of Western Europe into a Balkan civil war with few prospects for spillover into a member state.<sup>82</sup>

NATO member countries made an *ex ante* commitment not to use ground troops, hamstringing their efforts at coercive diplomacy as well as their ability to protect Kosovar Albanians from further atrocities.<sup>83</sup> The air campaign sacrificed actual effectiveness in limiting ethnic cleaning in order to limit casualties and preserve the political unity of NATO member states. The role of air power in the absence of ground troops has been hotly contested. It is unclear whether NATO bombing alone was able to force a decision, and whether the KLA on the ground or the potential threat of NATO ground troops forced Milošević to negotiate an end to the intervention. The explicit refusal of NATO countries—not just the United States, but also France and Germany—to entertain ground troops as an option for the intervention changed the character of the internal war, as different options and strategies were opened to

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U.S. military, because the U.S. then prosecuted a high altitude bombing campaign that had questionable compliance with the laws of war protecting civilians in the one area of the world with an active war crimes tribunal (the ICTY) operating with powers exceeding those of the ICC. Roberts (1999), pp. 107, 116.

<sup>81</sup> Henriksen (2008), pp. 825–826.

<sup>82</sup> The UNSC did provide a kind of negative authorization when it voted down a resolution sponsored by Russia (and supported by China and Namibia) calling for “an immediate cessation of the use of force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” During the discussions, the Slovenian representative argued that the UNSC has “the primary, but not exclusive, responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.” Roberts (1999), pp. 102, 104–105. Nichol (1999), p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Following the war, Tony Blair would blame the open American commitment to not deploy ground troops for the Serbian underestimation of the West’s determination, undermining the credibility of NATO’s threats from the beginning. Press-Barnathan (2006), p. 294.

Milošević and the KLA.<sup>84</sup> But the refusal to commit ground troops (especially since the KLA forces were meager and disorganized) must be seen as evidence of disengagement by the United States, while the use of an aerial bombing campaign illustrates the lower threshold to intervention that was allowed by abandonment of the Powell Doctrine.<sup>85</sup>

NATO took no action during the summer of 1998 when the “anti-terrorist” operations had commenced in Kosovo. Even in the face of humanitarian threats, intervention was stayed in favor of a political compromise wherein Milošević agreed to withdraw some forces and accede to international monitoring in Kosovo. It was not until the Račak massacre that NATO resolved to use force. Despite having already passed the ACTORD, NATO waited until the Rambouillet agreement was in place so as not to give *de facto* support to the KLA’s independence claim.<sup>86</sup>

According to multiple sources, including Ivo Daalder, the White House specialist on Bosnia, Clinton believed that the American public would not accept casualties. His reticence

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<sup>84</sup> Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 26.

<sup>85</sup> Eliot Cohen writes, “Air power is an unusually seductive form of military strength, in part because, like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment.” Byman & Waxman go on to write that, “Because policymakers often see air strikes as a low-risk, low-commitment measure, air power will be called on when U.S. public or allied commitment is weak—a situation that will make successful coercion far harder when casualties do occur or when air strikes fail to break adversary resistance. Air power, like other military instruments, cannot overcome a complete lack of political will.” Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 38.

Steven Redd also discusses this issue, “It is something of a puzzle to some critics, given Clinton’s evident qualms about risking and taking lives, why he had threatened and used military force on so many occasions.’ I believe the answer to this puzzle rests on the fact that when he used military force, in every instance he resorted to missile and air strikes because they were relatively risk-free. ...[I]n Kosovo as before, the decision on whether to use air strikes or ground troops... was most certainly made based on political calculations.” Redd (2005), p. 137.

Andrew Bacevic wrote, “The appeal of air power derived less from its proven operational ability in adjudicating civil wars or bringing dictators to heel than from the political advantages it offers to an administration operating with one eye fixed on the opinion polls. Relying on air power both reduces the risks of large-scale American casualties, and all but precludes the nightmare of another Mogadishu. ...Unlike operations by ground forces, air campaigns do not involve enduring commitments or responsibilities. Finally, air power provides assurances that the United States will not be drawn unawares into some quagmire from which it cannot easily extract itself.” Redd (2005), p. 146.

<sup>86</sup> Weller (1999), p. 249.

to put troops on the ground came from his experience with the interventions in Somalia and Haiti. This guided not just the administration's approach to Kosovo, but also their earlier approaches to Bosnia, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq.<sup>87</sup> During the Rambouillet negotiations in February 1999, the Under Secretary of State for political affairs Thomas Pickering told the House, "[W]e are not seeking to introduce American ground forces into a situation in which they would have to engage in combat."<sup>88</sup> And, when the Kosovo War began, President Clinton stated that, "I do not intend to put our troops into Kosovo to fight a war."<sup>89</sup>

The exclusive use of air power was widely criticized as ineffective in stopping the prosecution of crimes against humanity, and observers noted that the rate of ethnic cleansing rapidly increased *after* the bombing campaign began. Dispersed military forces, militias, and rebels – the types of actors that principally commit ethnic cleansing – are not vulnerable to air strikes in the way conventional military targets are.<sup>90</sup> The post-conflict assessment of the Serbian army indicated that the damage done was far less than believed, and that the portions of the bombing campaign targeting infrastructure in Serbia proper had been more effective.<sup>91</sup>

Fear of casualties led to both limiting the targets available to strike and mandating that pilots fly above 15,000 feet as a defensive measure.<sup>92</sup> Running a campaign entirely from that height leads to tactical choices that endanger civilians more than protect them: errors in

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<sup>87</sup> Barthe & David (2007), p. 91. *The Economist* reported that, "[T]he administration claimed the decision was taken to avoid upsetting Russia and to prevent a paralysing debate within NATO. In private, however, officials concede that the calculation was largely domestic: the president reckoned the public and Congress would not tolerate the loss of American lives. And Vice-President Al Gore feared his presidential chances could become collateral damage in a ground war." Redd (2005), pp. 138-139.

<sup>88</sup> Redd (2005), p. 139.

<sup>89</sup> Kay (2000), p. 73.

<sup>90</sup> Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), p. 132. Byman & Waxman (2000), pp. 16, 24. Hosmer (2001), pp. xviii, 82, 86-87.

<sup>91</sup> Roberts (1999), pp. 117-118. Arbatov (2000), pp. 12-14. Hosmer (2001), p. xvii.

<sup>92</sup> Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), p. 136. Mandelbaum (1999), p. 5. Roberts (1999), p. 110. Arbatov (2000), p. 14. Redd (2005), p. 137.

identifying and targeting, collateral damage, and pressure to attack fixed targets because they are easier to target rather than mobile targets, even though most of the Serbian military units operating in Kosovo were mobile.<sup>93</sup> Likewise, NATO did not use the U.S. Army Apache helicopters it deployed because of concern over casualties, prompting one observer to remark, “In the calculus of NATO democracies, the immediate possibility of saving thousands of Albanians from massacre and hundreds of thousands from deportation was obviously not worth the lives of a few pilots.”<sup>94</sup>

Critics pointed to the inability of the bombing campaign to actually stop the crimes against humanity from occurring. They point out that the atrocities accelerated by an order of magnitude after the air campaign began. The civil war had claimed 2,500 lives and resulted in 230,000 refugees before NATO intervened, but by the end 10,000 had died and 1.4 million Kosovars were displaced (of those 860,000 were driven outside Kosovo entirely).<sup>95</sup> Kosovar Albanians saw the accelerated Serb onslaught as a direct consequence of the bombing, especially since the campaign lacked a ground component that could engage Serb troops directly.<sup>96</sup> NATO governments responded to critics that the ethnic cleansing plans of “Operation Horseshoe” would have been carried out with or without the intervention.<sup>97</sup>

The United States later took actions designed to make it seem as though a ground invasion was both possible and imminent. By mid-May, Clinton averred that, “we have not and will not take any option off the table.” Shortly afterwards, NATO announced that 50,000

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<sup>93</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 115.

<sup>94</sup> Kay (2000), p. 75.

<sup>95</sup> Mandelbaum (1999), p. 3. Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 24.

<sup>96</sup> Roberts (1999), p. 113.

<sup>97</sup> Roberts (1999), pp. 113–114.

'KFOR-Plus' troops were to be deployed to the Kosovo border to ensure rapid implementation of any agreement. By the end of May, Defense Secretary Cohen flew to Europe to discuss options for a ground invasion his counterparts in NATO, which was subsequently leaked to the *New York Times*. At this time, Chernomyrdin advised Milošević that he believed a ground invasion was imminent, that Russia would not attempt to stop a NATO ground force, and that Milošević should settle before ground troops entered the war.<sup>98</sup>

Multiple post-conflict assessments argue that the NATO bombing campaign could not have achieved the limited success that it did within Kosovo without the provocations and targeting support of the KLA. The separatists' ground operations (aided by U.S. intelligence) forced Serbian units to expose themselves and concentrate at certain points, making them vulnerable to NATO air strikes.<sup>99</sup> Dag Henriksen characterized the air campaign as a "modern version of gunboat diplomacy."<sup>100</sup>

In a final irony, the post-conflict humanitarian peacekeepers presided over a reverse ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Kosovo. About 100,000 of the 200,000 Kosovar Serbs had to flee, despite the presence of UNMIK, KFOR, and the OSCE.<sup>101</sup>

Humanitarian intervention the articulated justification for the Kosovo War, but the United States and European countries did not make a unified case for humanitarianism as a norm justifying intervention more broadly. NATO's conduct of the war seems to undermine the humanitarian explanation, because the aerial methods chosen were clearly not effective in

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<sup>98</sup> Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), pp. 131–132. Roberts (1999), p. 118. Posen (2000), p. 74. Kay (2000), p. 75. Levitin (2000), p. 138. Hosmer (2001), pp. xx, 46, 112–113. Barthe & David (2007), p. 96.

<sup>99</sup> Daalder & O'Hanlon (1999), p. 131. Roberts (1999), pp. 110–111, 118. Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 28. Pape (2004), p. 123.

<sup>100</sup> Henriksen (2008), p. 827.

<sup>101</sup> Kay (2000), p. 78. Arbatov (2000), p. 13. Kuperman (2008), p. 67.

protecting Kosovar Albanians. Ground troops were much more likely to be able to stop the ethnic cleansing, but a ground force was ruled out in order to maintain domestic support and prevent friction within NATO. Humanitarian motivation is less convincing than the desire to maintain NATO cohesion and purpose as an explanation for the intervention into Kosovo.

Extrinsic interests more than intrinsic interests in Kosovo seem to explain NATO's intervention. Unipolarity structures the interests of the sole remaining superpower, affecting how it perceives the stakes involved in peripheral events and outcomes. The United States may not have had interests in Kosovo, but it did value keeping the NATO alliance cohesive and functional. Even though its relationship toward NATO and its European allies was changing—both were militarily less valuable given the extreme concentration of power within unipolarity. But NATO retained political importance enough that the United States did not want the alliance to fracture were it to ignore calls from major European states to help prevent genocide in NATO's neighborhood. Russia's interests similarly centered on its extrinsic interest in countering the threat of NATO than in any intrinsic interest in the FRY or Kosovo. Finally, while humanitarianism was the justification for the intervention, a number of factors make it appear as though humanitarian concerns consistently took a back seat to NATO cohesiveness.

#### *LOW FREEDOM OF MANEUVER*

For the two factions involved in the internal conflict over Kosovo – the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević, and the Kosovo Liberation Army – their freedom of maneuver to appeal for external assistance was radically limited by unipolarity compared to multipolarity or even bipolarity. There was only one country with an ability to intervene decisively: the United States as the sole remaining superpower. Milošević attempted to split the United States' European allies and position Russia against the U.S. in an

attempt to limit the intervention—the other external powers were not in a position to constrain the United States. The KLA attempted to attract U.S. support, but expended little effort on any other external powers, despite the inclination of the United States to keep the KLA at arms distance.

### **Slobodan Milošević**

It is difficult to impute Milošević's true strategic calculus, but several scholars have nevertheless examined his actions leading up to the Kosovo War and during negotiations; they attempt to discern what factors became decisive in indicating to Milošević that his strategy had failed. Milošević had limited freedom of maneuver: Russia and Europe were weak and, for different reasons, neither was willing to obstruct the NATO bombing campaign. It appears that his strategy was to count on Russian pressure and to take advantage of dissension within NATO, but ultimately the strategy failed despite some diplomatic successes.

Milošević's had three main interests in Kosovo. First, he had employed Serbian nationalism as a force that could fill in the political void left by communism. Second, he aimed to avoid any further losses of FRY territory. And third, Kosovo had symbolic value as a historic site of Serbian religious and military history. His proximate goals in pacifying and subordinating Kosovo were to ensure that Serbian residents would not suffer discrimination or attacks from Albanians, and to prevent Albanian separatists from tearing Kosovo away.<sup>102</sup>

The United States sent mixed signals to Milošević regarding what was acceptable in Kosovo. In February 1998, U.S. envoy Gelbard indicated that the U.S. was ready to lift some of the sanctions on Milošević – originally levied to pressure him to change his approach toward Kosovo – because he had cooperated with the Dayton agenda. Gelbard followed this by

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<sup>102</sup> Hosmer (2001), pp. xiv, 8–9. Barthe & David (2007), p. 88.

declaring that the KLA was “without any questions, a terrorist group” and that the U.S. “condemns very strongly terrorist activities in Kosovo.” So in March, Milošević launched his “anti-terrorist” incursion into Kosovo, with the secretary general of the Socialist Party, Gorica Gajević, declaring that, “Serbia will fight terrorism the same way the rest of the world does.” However, two days later, Albright responded, “We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they did in Bosnia.”<sup>103</sup>

The massacre at Račak prompted the German push for negotiations at Rambouillet.<sup>104</sup> Milošević sent envoys to negotiate, but delegated them little or no power to make an agreement. Milošević was offered terms that granted substantial autonomy for Kosovo (to be policed by NATO for three years), allowing free movement for NATO throughout the whole of the FRY, and a ending with a diplomatic process to decide the final status of Kosovo. Milošević could agree to autonomy, but not to the presence of NATO or the final vote on Kosovo’s status.<sup>105</sup> Negotiators pressed Milošević to accept foreign peacekeepers, signaling that his acceptance would then isolate the KLA in their demands for an independence referendum.<sup>106</sup> But any agreement by Milošević’s showing willingness to entertain the loss of Kosovo would have been the end of his place in Serbian politics. (Fascist, ultra-nationalist Vojislav Šešelj threatened to topple Milošević’s coalition were he to send a delegation to Rambouillet.) Milošević proposed an OSCE or UN presence rather than NATO presence in Kosovo, as the latter was an infringement upon FRY sovereignty (the former two were more palatable because of Russia’s

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<sup>103</sup> Caplan (1998), pp. 745, 753–754.

<sup>104</sup> Maull (2000), p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> “This has not been just a question of Kosovo, although Kosovo, too, is of immense importance to us. The freedom of our entire country is in question, and Kosovo would have only served as a door for foreign troops to get in and put in question precisely these greatest values of ours.” Posen (2000), pp. 44, 48. Hosmer (2001), p. 13.

<sup>106</sup> Bellamy (2000), p. 109.



presence).<sup>107</sup> Christopher Hill and a Contact Group delegation traveled to Belgrade to appeal to Milošević directly but could not get a meeting with him. Without a compromise on NATO peacekeepers, Milošević was unwilling to sign an agreement at Rambouillet, and instead chose to risk war.<sup>108</sup>

Yugoslavia had no military allies, but did have diplomatic support from Russia. It could credibly inflict unacceptable casualties on an invading force, which played a part in the NATO member states' decision not to commit ground troops. Milošević's strategy had to center on splitting NATO while Russia applied diplomatic pressure on their behalf. Milošević expected certain European NATO members to be even more averse to collateral damage than the United States, a reasonable belief given prior NATO dissension during the Bosnia campaign. European states facing the prospect of accepting mass refugees from the FRY or the destabilization of Montenegro, Macedonia, or Albania from refugees might become hesitant, especially if NATO bombing was seen to be producing even more refugees. Russian pressure could then be brought upon those European states to further exacerbate any splits.<sup>109</sup> Holbrooke believed that the Russians had passed Milošević intelligence indicating that the NATO bombing would be brief and light, and a French intelligence officer with a post at NATO also passed details of the bombing campaign to Serbian intelligence.<sup>110</sup>

Milošević's strategy was successful in deterring a ground invasion, in expelling Kosovar Albanians, and in limiting damage to the FRY forces. But he was unable to wholly destroy the KLA, unable to prevent the bombing of Serbia, and unable to achieve his overall political

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<sup>107</sup> Posen (2000), p. 47. Bellamy (2000), pp. 102–103. Hosmer (2001), pp. xiii–xiv, 16–17.

<sup>108</sup> Bellamy (2000), p. 109. Hosmer (2001), p. 17.

<sup>109</sup> Posen (2000), pp. 50–53. Hosmer (2001), p. xiv.

<sup>110</sup> Hosmer (2001), pp. 21–22, 25.

gambit of splitting NATO.<sup>111</sup> Germany, Italy, Greece, and Hungary were the most uneasy NATO members regarding the use of force. Russian diplomatic efforts in Germany resulted in German peace proposals made in mid-April that deviated from NATO's official war goals. Greece was most sympathetic to the Serbs, but did not have enough political capital within NATO to make a difference. Both Germany and Italy were led by left-leaning coalitions, and both countries saw anti-NATO protests at the outset of the bombing campaign. A BBC report indicated that Germany, Italy, Greece, and perhaps even France opposed the widening of the bombing campaign outside of Kosovo to include Serbia proper. France resisted plans for a naval blockade, while Germany and Italy proposed bombing pauses that the United States and Britain rebuffed. Mid-May party conferences held in Germany and Italy debated the intervention but failed to issue resolutions against it. The NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy and damage to the Swiss, Swedish, Norwegian, and Spanish ambassadors' residences also failed to produce enough political pressure to alleviate the air campaign in Serbia. A decisive mid-May shift occurred when Yeltsin sacked Primakov and replaced him with Chernomyrdin who began pressing Milošević to settle.<sup>112</sup>

Milošević's hope that a refugee crisis exacerbated by the bombing campaign would lead to European capitulation backfired. Rather than weakening European resolve, the prospect of ethnic cleansing was enough to overcome the European left's aversion to war. Milošević's efforts to get Russia to go beyond diplomatic intervention also failed: Chernomyrdin revealed that Milošević "tried very hard" to get Russia to join the conflict, and Yeltsin stated that, "Milošević behaved utterly without principle. In his relations with Russia, he... wagered on an

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<sup>111</sup> Posen (2000), pp. 62, 64. Sulejmanović (2008), p. 56.

<sup>112</sup> Posen (2000), pp. 66–72. Byman & Waxman (2000), pp. 34, 36–37. Maull (2000), pp. 4, 10, 12. Hosmer (2001), p. xix.

explosion of popular dissatisfaction with my foreign policy. He anticipated a split in Russian society and hoped to push Russia into a political and military confrontation with the West.” Because the costs of bombing were shifting public opinion in Belgrade against holding out, Milošević could then settle without exposing himself to domestic threats from the far right (for example, by 30 May 1999, Šešelj announced that some concessions were necessary and that foreign forces in Kosovo were acceptable).<sup>113</sup>

Fear of further and more devastating bombing of Serbia—not damage to his military in Kosovo nor any threat from the KLA—seems to have been the main reason for Milošević’s return to the negotiating table. When Finnish President Ahtisaari was reading NATO’s terms to Milošević, his first question to Chernomyrdin and Ahtisaari was reportedly, “Is this what I have to do to get the bombing stopped?” to which he received an affirmative answer from both.<sup>114</sup> However, other analysts believe that it was not the bombing, but what Milošević and Chernomyrdin perceived as the imminent threat of ground invasion that prompted Serbia’s negotiated surrender.<sup>115</sup>

Milošević’s freedom of maneuver was highly limited. During the Cold War he might have received effective diplomatic and military support from the Soviet Union or China. But without a rival bloc to appeal to, Milošević was left with no good options. He garnered what support he could from Russia while unsuccessfully attempting to split European NATO

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<sup>113</sup> Hosmer (2001), pp. 33–34, 38, 62.

<sup>114</sup> According to General Nebojša Pavković, “We were told [by the Russians] that if we refused the plan, every city in Serbia would be razed to the ground. The bridges in Belgrade would be destroyed. The crops would all be burned. Everyone would die.” The accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy also had a major effect on Belgrade where many people believed it was deliberate, and that the U.S. “did it on purpose to show the whole world that they are the only remaining superpower. To say to us: ‘How can such a small power do anything, when the U.S. can do this to China?’” Hosmer (2001), pp. xv–xix, xxiii–xxiv, 33–34, 38–39, 49, 62, 92–94, 96–97, 102.

<sup>115</sup> Pape (2004), p. 125.

members from the United States. Ultimately, it was Russia that pressured Milošević to negotiate in order to prevent the United States from seizing a more permanent military foothold in the Balkans.

### **The Kosovo Liberation Army**

The Kosovo Liberation Army had only one option in appealing for support – the United States – even though the U.S. had previously labeled them a terrorist organization and painted them as instigators of the instability in Kosovo. Neither Europe nor Russia was able (much less willing) to intervene on their behalf. Because they were militarily outmatched, despite the influx of weapons from Albania and money from the diaspora and organized crime, the KLA's only viable victory scenario involved getting the United States to intervene if not on the KLA's side then at least against Milošević. Against a common enemy, both the KLA and the United States had to maintain the pretense that they were not actively working together.

The KLA's mix of authoritarian political ideologies and connections to transnational organized crime were significant in preventing open cooperation from the United States. The goals of the United States and the KLA seemingly conflicted regarding the independence of Kosovo. Moreover, the United States' goal of regional stability would have been undermined by a surging post-conflict KLA.<sup>116</sup> The Clinton administration in 1998 did realize that the KLA – especially following the collapse of Albania and influx of weapons – was a destabilizing force in the region, which is why Robert Gelbard, the U.S. Special Envoy to the Balkans, declared that the KLA was “without any question a terrorist group.” The Contact Group attempted to isolate the KLA at the expense of the LDK in negotiations—Christopher Hill, the Contact Group's chief negotiator promised that Kosovo could not “shoot its way out of Serbia”—while the UNSC

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<sup>116</sup> Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 30.

passed Resolution 1160 condemning “all acts of terrorism” in Kosovo, and the North Atlantic Council voiced its opposition to “all use of violence... by terrorist groups.” SACEUR Wesley Clark even hinted that NATO could pursue operations against the KLA with Albanian cooperation. In persuading Milošević to sign on to the Holbrooke Agreement, Wesley Clark and Klaus Naumann assured him that if he agreed, that NATO could then “turn the table so that the KLA [were] seen as the bad guys” and that NATO would “try to control” the KLA. Albright stated, “We have... delivered a clear message to the leadership of the Kosovo Liberation Army: there should be no attempt to take military advantage of the Serb pull-back. Neither side can achieve military victory in Kosovo.” Another western diplomat put it more colloquially to the KLA “not to start trouble because we are not going to bail them out,” a sentiment that Holbrooke later echoed on a visit to Pristina when he warned that Kosovars “would then be on their own, face to face with Milošević’s tanks and helicopter gunships.” The U.S. State Department stated that it had told the KLA that if it “doesn’t hold to the cease-fire and conducts provocations, that will negatively affect international support for their cause,” while Albright went further saying that NATO demanded that the KLA behave reasonably, or “they would lose completely the backing of the United States and the Contact Group.”<sup>117</sup> Put simply, the United States attempted to give the KLA as little room to maneuver as possible in seeking U.S. support.

Despite Western rhetorical attempts to keep the KLA restrained, the West’s rhetoric directed against Milošević was heard louder. The ramped up threats and condemnations of Milošević beginning in 1996–1997 was taken as a sign that the West would intervene if Milošević resorted to the use of force against Kosovar Albanians. Professor Ibrahim Berisha

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<sup>117</sup> Crawford (2001–2002), pp. 506–508, 512, 514. Bellamy (2000), p. 100. Bekaj (2010), p. 21.

after the conflict said, “They threatened Milošević not to use force or commit crimes. If it had been said by small powers, it wouldn’t have meant anything, but it was said by America and world powers. Our men who were armed in those days understood that signal.” Kosovo’s leading Albanian journalist Veton Surroi recognized that, “If international attention can only be obtained through war, and if war is merely an intermediate stage on the road to recognition of the right of self-determination, this is a sufficient signal to forces distrustful of peaceful methods in Kosova,” and later, “There is a message that is being sent to the Kosovars—if you want to draw international attention you have to fight for it.” Dugi Gorani, an Albanian negotiator at Rambouillet, confided, “there was this foreign diplomat who once told me, ‘Look, unless you pass the quota of five thousand deaths you’ll never have anybody permanently present in Kosovo from foreign diplomacy.’” A former politician Shkelzen Maliqi said, “foreign diplomats—for example, Americans and Swedes—in private would say, ‘you need to fight.’” The KLA’s Emrush Xhemajli likewise stated, “At the diplomatic level, the diplomats always repeated the official position. But at other levels—for example, the intelligence services—they were more realistic about the way the Balkans were heading.”<sup>118</sup>

The lessons the KLA had drawn from Dayton were that Rugova’s nonviolent resistance had failed and that civilian casualties were the only way to obtain Western support for independence. The KLA’s strategy became one of provocation: to incite Serbian attacks upon Kosovar Albanians brutal enough to prompt Western intervention.<sup>119</sup> Following the Holbrooke Agreement in 1998, NATO did not cut off the KLA’s supply lines, officially designate them as a terrorist group, or effectively restrain them. The KLA then became the

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<sup>118</sup> Kuperman (2008), p. 70.

<sup>119</sup> Crawford (2001–2002), p. 504. Bellamy (2000), p. 99. Kuperman (2008), pp. 64, 69. Bekaj (2010), p. 12.

primary drivers of the escalation that would lead to Račak and Rambouillet, and the United States knew this: “U.S. intelligence reported almost immediately that the KLA intended to draw NATO into its fight for independence by provoking Serb forces into further atrocities.” The North Atlantic Council met and concluded that the KLA was “the main initiator of violence,” that “it has launched what appears to be a deliberate campaign of provocation,” and that “the majority of violations [were] caused by the KLA.” By the end of 1998, NATO demanded that, “armed Kosovar elements... cease and desist from provocative actions” and in January of 1999, Albright admitted that KLA “provocations have contributed significantly to the renewed deep tensions in Kosovo.”<sup>120</sup>

Post-conflict interviews with KLA leaders have confirmed that their strategy was premised on the moral hazard of provoking atrocities in order to spur a Western intervention. Head of the KLA political directorate Hashim Thaçi admitted, “We knew full well that any armed action we undertook would trigger a ruthless retaliation by Serbs against our people... We knew we were endangering civilian lives.” Another KLA fighter said, “It was guaranteed that every time we took action they would take revenge on citizens.” KLA commander Emrush Xhemajli revealed, “We knew our attacks would not have any military value. Our goal was not to destroy the Serb military force.” A 1998 press report cited pro-KLA politician Berdhyl Mahmuti as saying that the rebel aim was to “attract heavy Yugoslav barrages and thus win strong international sympathy, as the Croats did in Vukovar.” Xhemajli confirmed that his attacks were intended to “make the enemy show his real face—become more vicious. ...We thought it was essential to get international support for the war.” Dugi Gorani conceded that

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<sup>120</sup> Crawford (2001–2002), pp. 512–515. Kay (2000), p. 79.

“every single Albanian realized that the more civilians die, intervention comes nearer... and the KLA of course realized that.”<sup>121</sup> U.S. officials concluded after the war that the KLA systematically misinformed NATO on the number of Albanian deaths in order to increase international support for their cause.<sup>122</sup>

Nevertheless, at Rambouillet the KLA was put in a position where it could not turn down NATO’s offer, although they walked away from the deal initially and had to be prodded back to the negotiating table to accept it. NATO was giving Kosovo an offer of a protectorate for a limited period of time, and Albright explained that no action could be taken against the FRY without the KLA dropping their demands for an independence referendum. Bob Dole, who was supportive of the Kosovar Albanians, toured Kosovo to warn them that if they did not accept the Rambouillet plan, “We’ll abandon you if you don’t sign.” If the KLA failed to sign – as the hardliner KLA leader Adem Demaçi wanted – Milošević would then have a free hand in Kosovo. But Demaci stepped down after initially rejecting the Rambouillet plan, and Hashim Thaçi as the head of the KLA delegation to Rambouillet was then able to sign the agreement.<sup>123</sup>

When the bombing campaign began, NATO still kept its distance from the KLA, at least publicly. An interview with Azen Sylja, a founding member of the KLA, a week into the bombing revealed that the KLA “is facing imminent military defeat unless NATO airdrops heavy weaponry to help the guerillas survive,” a plea that NATO apparently ignored. Reporters indicated that, “U.S. officials have said repeatedly that they do not want NATO warplanes to become ‘the KLA’s air force,’ even as they support the rebel group’s resistance to government

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<sup>121</sup> Kuperman (2008), p. 67.

<sup>122</sup> Kay (2000), pp. 79–80.

<sup>123</sup> Crawford (2001–2002), pp. 519–521. Bellamy (2000), p. 109.



repression.” NATO hesitancy to associate with the KLA was based on concerns about the organization as a terrorist group, receiving support from Islamic fundamentalists, being linked to DEA-acknowledged drug trafficking networks, and pursuing an irredentist Greater Albania that could destabilize Macedonia.<sup>124</sup>

NATO cooperated indirectly with the KLA, but refused to provide official assistance or Western special forces units. The KLA could use satellite telephones to relay targeting information through designated intermediaries, but this frustrated the KLA because they believed that many opportunities were missed by not being able to actively act as spotters for NATO planes. Rexhep Selimi, one of the founders of the KLA, said that KLA soldiers considered themselves “NATO’s ground force.” The KLA held a press conference 25 April 1999 in order to “plead anew for a battlefield alliance with NATO.”<sup>125</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Wilson briefed the Pentagon on 27 May 1999 telling them, “NATO warplanes are targeting Yugoslav mechanized armor and heavy weapons on the ground in part to ‘level the playing field’ between the secessionist militia and its adversaries” but stressed that the “KLA is not a partner in the war,” and Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon reiterated, “[O]ur goal has never been to empower the KLA to create more fighting.” By the beginning of June 1999, it appeared that NATO and the KLA were more systematically coordinating. The *Washington Post* reported that NATO for the first time responded to urgent KLA pleas for air support during the KLA’s Operation Arrow, that NATO and KLA forces were routinely talking, that NATO monitored KLA communications, and that the KLA kept NATO apprised of its positions.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Smith (2001), p. 7. Kuperman (2008), p. 53.

<sup>125</sup> Smith (2001), pp. 7–8. Bekaj (2010), p. 25.

<sup>126</sup> Smith (2001), pp. 8–9.

By inducing an American intervention, the KLA were able to achieve goals far beyond what they could have on their own. The KLA had no practical ability to gain control of Kosovo, it controlled limited territory within the province, and it had not defeated the Serbian army even by the end of Operation Allied Force. Yet, the negotiated termination to the war included the full withdrawal of the Serbian army from Kosovo.<sup>127</sup>

Unipolarity structured the interests of both the internal factions appealing for support and the external powers weighing intervention. Both Milošević and the KLA had to adjust their strategies to compensate for the starkly different distribution of power as the international system had shifted from bipolarity to unipolarity, affecting the viability of their diplomatic strategies. The KLA could only win with support from the United States, but the U.S. would not openly ally with them. Thus their only viable strategy was to provoke atrocities in order to draw in the United States and its NATO allies.

### *SUMMARY*

The theory expects that unipolarity will uniquely shape the interests of internal factions and external powers. Unipolarity ought to feature a lack of counterintervention, the political and strategic disengagement of the polar power, diffuse conceptions of its interests, and highly limited freedom of maneuver for internal factions. The United States, as the sole remaining superpower, displayed these somewhat paradoxical behaviors as a result of the constraints and opportunities of a unipolar distribution of power. It was recognized by all involved parties as being capable of employing more advanced military force than any other country, not just lessening dependence on allies, but giving it an incentive to circumvent its allies. Even as it attempted to escape the constraints of NATO and the UN, it was ostensibly motivated by a

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<sup>127</sup> Byman & Waxman (2000), p. 30.

desire to maintain these institutions as important parts of the international order that it sponsored. These extrinsic interests were a higher priority than any intrinsic interests in Kosovo, leading the United States to behave in a politically disengaged manner until leadership was absolutely necessary, and then to intervene without much planning or strategy. Both Europe and Russia acknowledged the new unipolar distribution of power, and were cognizant of the disadvantages they faced within it, but also recognized that there was ultimately little they could do to effectively constrain the United States. Finally, both Milošević and the KLA faced extremely difficult circumstances in maneuvering to obtain political and military support.

## **Polarity & Ideology**

Unipolarity structures the effect of transnational political ideology differently than either multipolarity or bipolarity. Like multipolarity, unipolarity lessens ideology's importance as a link between external powers weighing intervention and internal factions seeking support. But unipolarity's mitigating effect is potentially broader than that of multipolarity: external powers within multipolarity are less driven by ideological affiliation with internal factions, but internal factions are still driven by opportunism to claim an ideological position and petition for external support on that basis; but, within unipolarity not only do external powers pay less attention to ideology, the internal factions seeking external support perceive less to gain from claiming ideology as the basis for their appeals. Ideology is independent of the distribution of power, but its effect is still structured by the number of great powers, especially because great powers sponsor ideologies, giving them wider range and more vigorous political importance. Without a peer competitor to sponsor a rival ideology, a unipolar power does not see the same stakes in ideological internal wars, nor necessarily in transnational ideological spillover from an

internal war. When external powers cease to impose an ideological interpretation onto the factions involved in an internal war, and internal factions are less likely to opportunistically claim an ideology, internal wars are seen through different lenses: universalist “disinterested” humanitarianism, or as a manifestation of a particularistic ethnic politics. As such, the explosion in the category of “ethnic conflict” after the Cold War was less an unleashing of ancient hatreds and more what results when conflict was stripped of ideology.

The Kosovo War is an important test of the effect of ideology as it is structured by unipolarity. Unlike multipolarity and bipolarity, transnational political ideology does not play an important role in defining the internal factions, nor does it link those factions to neighboring countries. Neither Milošević nor the KLA attempted to claim a transnational political ideology to legitimize their actions or draw in external support; rather, the conflict over Kosovo was framed domestically and regionally in terms of sovereignty and ethnicity. Despite Milošević’s past presidency of the League of Communists of Serbia, his status as the head of the Socialist Party of Serbia in the FRY, and his wife’s continued orthodox communism, no external powers – U.S., Europe, or Russia – understood the conflict in terms of communism or anti-communism. Nor did external powers weight the stakes of the Kosovo War’s outcome in terms of ideological affiliation. Instead, the potential outcomes were assessed with regards to the post-conflict institutional arrangement and what that arrangement implied for the post-Cold War security order. Lacking an ideological element is one reason why the Kosovo War was less intense than the internal wars seen during bipolarity, with no sponsorship of internal factions, no counterintervention (despite being called for domestically in Russia), a short duration and

relatively low battle deaths, and a negotiated settlement based on indefinite partition rather than a military victory.

This section proceeds in two parts. First, it examines the role of Marxism in the Kosovo War, illustrating how an ideological affiliation that would have been very significant during the Cold War was rendered insignificant in shaping the transnational or international understanding of the conflict. Second, it looks at liberalism, the ideology that was ascendant and triumphant during the post-Cold War period. Instead of significantly motivating or constraining the United States and its key NATO allies, their ideological commitments ultimately played only a minor role in explaining the Kosovo War.

#### *MARXISM HAD NO EFFECT*

Within unipolarity, the various strains of Marxism represented in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Russia did not have a significant effect in indicating affiliation and transnational links between internal factions, regional actors, and external powers. In an earlier era, Titoist communism, Enverist Stalinism, and the orthodox Marxism-Leninism of the Soviet Union would have been central to drawing the friend–enemy distinctions between the various parties appealing for support or weighing intervention. But, in the case of the Kosovo War, the ideological affiliations of Milošević and the KLA had little effect on the conflict. In Russia, Yeltsin had to maneuver around the Russian Communist Party, but the Communist attachment to Serbia was an ethnic chauvinism drained of ideological content.

During the Cold War, Milošević's communist credentials would have been an important indicator of his alignment and could have been the basis for receiving external support (notwithstanding the long-term ideological disagreements between Titoist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union). But as the Cold War drew to a close, Milošević viewed communism less

as an asset than as something to be maneuvered around. It was not transnational political ideology that served as the basis for domestic legitimacy and international appeal, but a particularistic Serbian ethno-religious identity. Milošević's communist and socialist party membership would have been an important part of Western perceptions of civil conflict in Yugoslavia and of their justifications for action, but in the post-Cold War era his party membership was of marginal importance.

Despite his communist and later socialist party leadership positions, few commentators believed that Milošević maintained a genuine belief in Marxist ideology. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rapidly declining support for communism globally, Milošević latched onto ethno-nationalism as a substitute source of political legitimacy.<sup>128</sup> By the late 1980s, communism in Yugoslavia was in crisis: Tito had died and reforms had failed. Milošević faced a crisis of confidence in the relevance of the party. In 1987, Milošević turned to nationalism – not Yugoslavian nationalism but Serbian nationalism – to ensure his continued political power. It was 24 April 1987 when Milošević visited Kosovo and told the Serbian minority in the majority Albanian province that “no one should dare to beat you,” and “not to retreat in the face of obstacles,” nor to demobilize “when they should fight.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> It was actually Milošević's wife, Mirjana “Mira” Marković, who was seen as the more orthodox communist, the prodding force behind Slobodan's political career, and his chief strategist. Mira taught Marxism for communist party officials at Belgrade University, and her circle of friends and colleagues there were the most dogmatic and hardline Marxists. Silber (1996), pp. 63, 66.

<sup>129</sup> Silber (1996), p. 66. Judah (1999), pp. 5, 10. Henning Knutsen argues that Milošević's turn to nationalism was almost accidental. Milošević was sent by federal authorities to inquire into unrest in Kosovo. There, he met with Serb nationalists in the Pristina suburb of Kosovo Polje and gave them the anodyne Titoist slogan of “brotherhood and unity.” It was only when Serbian extremists *outside* the meeting provoked a confrontation with police that Milošević made his fateful nationalist proclamations, which Serbian television then widely broadcast for their own propaganda purposes. After Milošević witnessed the political capital that this statement brought him, *then* he shifted decisively toward nationalism. Knutsen (2012), p. 31. Two months later in June, Milošević addressed a meeting of the secret police, warning them that the return of “darkest nationalism” would cause the “disintegration” of Yugoslavia “after which there is no survival for any nation or nationality... Tito's policy of

Milošević had to navigate around communism as he consolidated his domestic political power. In 1993, his Serbian Socialist Party was rhetorically indicating that it was returning to its “leftist roots,” while in actuality was purging itself of its more leftist members.<sup>130</sup> When Milošević again saw his potential domestic political weakness in the lead-up to Rambouillet, he incorporated into government both the ultranationalist Serb Radical Party led by fascist Vojislav Šešelj and the communists of the JUL led by his wife.<sup>131</sup> But it was principally the threat from the right, not the left, which governed whether and when Milošević could concede to NATO.<sup>132</sup>

On the other side, the KLA’s mixture of ideologies made it an unattractive affiliate for both the West and Russia. While its Stalinist and anti-Titoist faction might have garnered support from the Soviet Union at one time, following the Cold War its combination of anti-democratic communist and fascist factions almost certainly undermined their ability to appeal for external support. Following Tito’s death, the 1981 student protests in Priština for greater Kosovar rights were interpreted by Belgrade through an ideological lens. In the protests, Yugoslavia saw the possibility of an “Enverist” plot being directed from Albania. Enver Hoxha’s Stalinist Albania had long maintained difficult relations with Tito’s Yugoslavia, especially regarding the issue of the Kosovar Albanians. It is unclear if the students had

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brotherhood and unity... is the only basis on which Yugoslavia’s survival can be secured.” This suggests his transformation from Titoist to Serbian nationalist might not have been an immediate and full conversion.

<sup>130</sup> His wife Mira, who had not abandoned communist rhetoric like Slobodan had, led a different political party, the Yugoslav United Left (JUL), to which the purged socialists migrated. The JUL had no seats in parliament, but comprised half of the cabinet. Nevertheless, Slobodan’s own party had been cleansed of potential threats from the left, and those who remained demonstrated their loyalty to him. Silber (1996), p. 68.

<sup>131</sup> Bellamy (2000), p. 102.

<sup>132</sup> Bellamy (2000), p. 109. Hosmer (2001), pp. 17, 38.

Enverist sympathies, but their object was not principally ideological, it was ultimately about the national reunification of Albanians.<sup>133</sup>

The Kosovar party that emerged from the collapse of communism and the one-party state was the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), headed by the literary critic Ibrahim Rugova.<sup>134</sup> The KLA's ideology was characterized as, "hints of fascism on one side and whiffs of communism on the other." One faction was comprised of the descendants of rightwing Albanian fighters who fought in WWII on the side of the fascists against Tito's partisans. The other faction was led by Enverist exiles, many of whom were participants in the 1981 student protests in Priština. Neither side favored democracy—their overlap was solely in their desire for independence.<sup>135</sup> Despite fighting against the same enemy, NATO allies attempted to keep their distance from the KLA.

Within Russia, the Communist Party remained one of the major political forces, led by Gennady Zyuganov. The communists within Russia advocated for the support of socialism around the world, and pressed for the institutional use of the UN to help maintain the balance between socialist and capitalist states, but they had little ability to affect Russian foreign policy following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Zyuganov condemned "aggressive Western militarism," called NATO "the outpost of aggression," wanted support for "the movements of national liberation," and believed the Western agenda in the former Yugoslavia was not

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<sup>133</sup> Judah (1999), pp. 8–9.

<sup>134</sup> The LDK was a conservative party defined not by a motivating ideology, but by a realistic pacifism and desire for eventual independence, created out of Belgrade's 1989 revocation of Kosovo's autonomy. The pacifism of Rugova and the rest of the LDK political elite was also furthered by the hope that the de-ideologization of East-West relations, democratization of Yugoslavia, and international peacekeeping institutions would make their independence bid feasible. Judah (1999), pp. 11–12. Buja (2011), p. 14.

<sup>135</sup> "I do not think we have an ideology," Jakup Krasniqi, the KLA's mercurial spokesman, told the Albanian-language daily *Koha Ditore* on July 12, 1998. "And in fact we do not have time for such things even if we were interested in them, because we have our main job to do, which is the task of liberation." Hedges (1999), pp. 26–28.



humanitarian but aimed at the imposition of liberalism on the states emerging from dismembered Yugoslavia. In his view, Russia was the last hope for countering U.S. hegemony, and Russia needed to get involved in the conflict on the side of Serbia (e.g. providing Serbia with air defense systems) in order to broadcast that Russia would defend its traditional allies. Communist deputies in the Duma – Gennady Seleznyov, Nikolai Ryzhkov, Sergey Baburin, and others – even traveled to Belgrade to sign an agreement with Milošević supporting the idea of a common union between Russia, Belarus, and Yugoslavia. Other communist politicians – Gennady Zyuganov, Nikolai Ryzhkov and Nikolai Kharitonov – decried the agreement brokered by Chernomyrdin and demanded an investigation of his treachery.<sup>136</sup>

However, the ultimate effect of the communists on the foreign policy of Russia was limited to the rhetoric employed by Yeltsin. They created a domestic political environment in which Yeltsin had to condemn NATO and justify lack of a Russian counterintervention. But Yeltsin also spoke directly against the communist calls for ethnic solidarity, denouncing the idea that Russia was obliged to defend its “Slavonic brothers” as “ideological garbage.”<sup>137</sup> The employment of pan-Slavic rhetoric by Moscow politicians appeared to be political, instrumental, and disingenuous.<sup>138</sup> Yeltsin was acutely aware of his domestic political weakness and was attempting to prevent the type of military confrontation with NATO that would empower the Communist and Nationalist parties as well as the General Staff. This domestic weakness may then explain why Yeltsin appointed Chernomyrdin to negotiate an end to the Kosovo War, even if the terms were favorable to NATO.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Tsygankov (2001), pp. 144, 149. Brovkin (2009), pp. 16–17.

<sup>137</sup> Nichol (1999), p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> Stepanova (2000), p. 208.

<sup>139</sup> Brovkin (2009), pp. 31–32.

During the Cold War, rival strains of Marxism would have played a significant role in defining the internal cleavages in Yugoslavia and Kosovo, and would have shaped how external powers viewed the stakes of the conflict and which factions they might affiliate with. But following the shift from bipolarity to unipolarity, and the collapse of a peer competitor sponsoring a rival ideology, the post-Cold War internal wars were rarely ideological, and if they did feature an ideology, it was not a significant factor in determining the international stakes in the war's outcome. The Kosovo War featured a secession attempt from an allegedly Enverist guerilla force, combated by a formerly communist leader seeking assistance from a traditional ally where the communist part was still a significant voice in its domestic politics. Yet, these links existed in the background of the conflict, insignificant in shaping its onset or intervention.

#### *LIBERALISM HAD LITTLE EFFECT*

Insofar as humanitarian intervention can be regarded as an aspect of modern liberalism, the motivation of the United States and United Kingdom can be seen through the lens of ideology. France and especially Germany had more visible struggles reconciling their strong currents of leftism with the inchoate 'responsibility to protect.' However, neither Anglo nor Continental NATO members saw their intervention as being on behalf of fellow liberals, even if it were undertaken for liberal principles.

Most accounts attempting to link the United States' intervention in Kosovo to liberal ideology note the affirmative character of U.S.-European cooperation through NATO and the triumph of liberalism in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. But the sole causal argument based on liberalism centers on humanitarian intervention as an emergent international norm, although some of the more extreme critics of the Kosovo War believe the U.S. was motivated by

a desire to spread neo-liberal market capitalism.<sup>140</sup> The normative argument sees Kosovo as part of a progression beginning with Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kurdistan. Kosovo would be a larger, more forceful, and unambiguously disinterested humanitarian intervention. Further, the post-war peace-building would be a demonstration of the liberal international institutional order, unshackled by the end of the Cold War.<sup>141</sup> But, as discussed above, humanitarianism and liberal internationalism seemed to take a back seat to NATO alliance politics in practice.

German participation was a struggle for leftists to come to grips with liberalism; Germany certainly was not motivated by a missionary zeal for liberal internationalism. The SPD's Gerhard Schröder and Green Party's Joschka Fischer were confronted immediately upon their election in 1998 with the question of a NATO out-of-area intervention—they took office only six months before the bombing campaign began. Both the Social Democrats and Greens had historically been against German military participation in actions outside of NATO countries proper, had previously called for the dissolution of all military alliances in their party platforms, and had a large contingent of pacifists left over from the 1980s peace movement.<sup>142</sup> Having witnessed the massacres at Srebrenica and Žepa, the reflexively pacifist politicians that had come of age in 1968 were now agonizingly beginning to admit that the principle of “no more war” had to lose out to “no more genocide.”<sup>143</sup> Schröder called a Special Party Congress in April 1999 in order to win SPD support for participation in

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<sup>140</sup> Bellamy (2001), p. 35.

<sup>141</sup> British participation in the intervention into Kosovo was explicitly premised on liberal internationalism. Tony Blair's speech in Chicago in April 1999 outlined his foreign policy vision. He contextualized the need for intervention in Kosovo within the broader development of globalization arguing that, because all countries were increasingly interdependent, “We are all internationalists now, whether we like it or not.” The relevance of Kosovo to international security was framed through a notion of international community, the credibility of NATO, and the lessening importance of sovereignty. Daddow (2009), pp. 548–549. Cottey (2009), p. 603.

<sup>142</sup> Friedrich, Ischinger and Scharping (2000), p. 7. Hyde-Price (2001), p. 25.

<sup>143</sup> Pond (1999), p. 78.

the NATO intervention. While reassuring party members that pacifists had a home in the SPD, he stressed German responsibility to both NATO allies and the victims of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. He was ultimately successful in obtaining support from a majority of his party. Fischer was less successful at maintaining Green support for the intervention.<sup>144</sup>

Liberalism's focus on human rights and humanitarianism did shape the United States and Germany's understanding of the Kosovo War. While liberalism served as a motivation for and justification for intervention, humanitarianism did not outweigh other interests, primarily the desire to maintain NATO cohesion. The United States did not employ means that were designed around humanitarianism. And, Fischer's push to involve Germany was perceived just as much as realism as it was liberalism.

## SUMMARY

Unipolarity structures the effect of transnational political ideology differently than either multipolarity or bipolarity. Unlike bipolarity where ideology was an effective signal of alignment, within unipolarity ideological affiliation had little effect at all on how internal or external actors perceived the stakes of the conflict or alignment patterns. The fact that parties in the FRY, Kosovo, and Russia were communist had little or no effect on the character of the

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<sup>144</sup> Hyde-Price (2001), p. 25. Fischer, who had earlier characterized himself as a follower of Machiavelli (transitioning from "radical" to "*Reale*"), was instrumental in 1995–96 in pushing some of the Greens toward supporting the deployment of the *Bundeswehr* to Bosnia for the IFOR and SFOR missions. "In the earlier 1990s, SPD foreign and security policy expert Karsten Voigt, one of few in the party, found himself 'defamed as a militarist and warmonger' for advocating Germany's equal participation with its NATO allies." Wood (2002), pp. 250, 253n6, 254–255, 258, 264. Maull (2000), p. 7. Friedrich, Ischinger and Scharping (2000), p. 8.

Fischer explained the conflict in terms of the tension between the German leftism and liberal interventionism: "We are in a real conflict between basic values. On the one hand, there is the renunciation of force as a vision of a world in which conflicts are resolved rationally... a world in which military means are rejected... On the other hand, there is the bloody dilemma that human beings may be able to survive only with the use of military force. Between solidarity for survival and our commitment to non-violence – that is our dilemma." Wood (2002), p. 264. Maull (2000), p. 7.

On May 13, 1999, the Green party narrowly rejected a motion for "an immediate and unconditional termination of the NATO bombing," instead passing a motion with the revised wording calling for a "limited halt" to the bombing campaign. Hosmer (2001), p. 125n3.

Kosovo War. Likewise, liberalism was important to the Western identity and to the motivation to weaken sovereignty in the name of human rights, but ultimately liberalism took a back seat role in determining the character of the intervention itself.

## **Polarity & Sovereignty**

The theory describes why the structural incentives created by different polarities can affect the propensity toward formal or informal imperialism. Not only is decolonization constitutive of shifts in polarity, but the subsequent structural effects of a new polarity then affect the politics surrounding new states, statebuilding, and the relationship of the core toward internal wars. The post-Communist world has featured a number of internal wars during unipolarity, because of the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The politics of new state creation is different within unipolarity, because there is no systemic conflict inherent with only one superpower, as opposed to bipolarity and multipolarity, which feature two or more polar powers that exist in a strategic balance with one another.

Formal imperial sovereignty during multipolarity gave way to informal imperialism during bipolarity, because the clarity of alignments within bipolarity obviates the need for a formally imperial relationship. Informal imperialism remains the dominant mode of interaction between core and periphery in unipolarity, but for different reasons. The sole superpower does not face a peer competitor that can gain a critical advantage from the outcome of a given event. Without the threat of a rival exploiting upheaval to poach an aligned country, there is no incentive to formalize imperial relationships between core and periphery.

Thus the politics of new state creation is different than multipolarity's Monroe Doctrine and bipolarity's neutralizations. Association with certain institutions (NATO and

the EU principally) still carries with it a politics of alignment, but unlike bipolarity there is no alternate international institutional system. A new state can turn toward the West or away from the West, but there is no source of competing power.<sup>145</sup> The concentration of power projection capability in a sole superpower, combined with dependence on international institutions, leads to a weakening of the institution of sovereignty more broadly.<sup>146</sup>

The Kosovo War is a rich case against which to test the expectations of theory against the historical record. First, the theory argues that the location, timing, and frequency of internal war are partially an effect of new state creation, and that major waves of new state creation are a consequence of and constitutive of shifts in polarity. The Kosovo War was part of the wave of state creation that accompanied the collapse of communism throughout Eastern Europe as the Soviet Union fell from the rank of superpower.

Second, because the valence of events in unipolarity is unclear but the structure is not one of inherent conflict, informal imperialism toward the peripheries remains the dominant mode of exercising influence. In practice, this means that the ultimate alignment of the secessionist Kosovo (or of the FRY rump state) was not a principal concern for the United States. Nevertheless, the politics surrounding Kosovo's status both internally and externally reflected a concern with colonial or neo-colonial status. Kosovo's constitutional status within the FRY was frequently framed as colonial insofar as it lacked equal standing with the other constitutive republics of the FRY and was denied autonomy. And, the negotiations regarding

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<sup>145</sup> A hubristic analogy would liken the possibilities of alignment within unipolarity to those faced by Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*: Satan can turn away from God toward an isolated interiority and put God out of his thoughts (Psalm 10:4), but God remains the only source of life and light; there is no alternate source power to align with or draw from, Satan can only turn away. Satan can rebel, but cannot rival or replace God. The position of the sole remaining superpower vis-à-vis challengers is not so secure.

<sup>146</sup> Brzezinski (2005).

Kosovo's postwar status centered on whether and for how long Kosovo might become a UN or, more worryingly for Russia, a NATO protectorate.

Third, despite Russian strategic concerns and domestic political outcry, there was no serious attempt at or possibility of counterintervention, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. Consequently, the politics of new state creation within unipolarity was different than in multipolarity or bipolarity. Rather than a zone of exclusion or an attempt at internal political neutralization, Kosovo was managed by set of international institutions, the operation of which was made possible by the end of the bipolar standoff. Fourth, one of the pathologies of weak states is the attempt to bandwagon with otherwise threatening external powers against internal threats. In this case, Milošević viewed diplomatic support from Russia and later the introduction of Russian troops as a way to prevent the collapse of FRY sovereignty over Kosovo, despite the Cold War standoff between the USSR and Yugoslavia, whose very independence and autonomy was premised on having kept the Red Army out of Yugoslav territory during WWII.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the Kosovo War could be counted as a “new state” conflict. The war began in 1998, following the 1991 breakup of Yugoslavia, which is within the fifteen-year post-independence period that this dissertation uses to define a ‘new state war.’ However, as a legal and “accounting” matter, it is not clear whether to count FRY as a ‘new state.’ The international legal recognition of the FRY changed over the period of 1992–2000. It was initially recognized as the legal successor to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. So the Kosovo War could simply be viewed as a secessionist movement out of the legal successor state to Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia rump state. But later the SFRY was ruled as

having ‘dissolved,’ so the FRY was not a successor, rather it was a new state alongside the other post-Yugoslavia republics.<sup>147</sup> Despite Belgrade directly inheriting the SFRY’s state apparatus, the *de jure* international reclassification of the FRY as a new state was pushed by the U.S., Russia, and other European states, in part to reverse the security implications of Germany’s precipitous rush to recognize Croatian secession. Either way, Kosovo can still serve as an example of the constitutive effect that shifts in polarity have on the location and political roots of internal wars.

This section proceeds in two parts. First, it describes the continuing political importance of “colonialism” or imperial sovereignty to internal war, despite the formal process of decolonization having ended during the Cold War. Both the grievances of the Kosovar Albanians and the objections of the Russians were framed in terms of colonialism. Second, it demonstrates what the Kosovo War reveals about the politics of new state creation within unipolarity, and how the institutions of unipolarity resulted in a different international approach to internal war than did multipolarity’s Monroe Doctrine or bipolarity’s neutralizations.

### *NEO-COLONIALISM*

The second wave of decolonization was completed during the Cold War; nevertheless, in the post-Cold War period, colonial or imperial sovereignty remained politically and rhetorically important in framing both internal grievances and external solutions to internal war. The case of Kosovo demonstrates this in both respects. First, Kosovo’s grievances toward

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<sup>147</sup> The legal succession of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was more complex than other successions. In 1992, the FRY claimed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s UN seat and was recognized by the UN as SFRY’s legal successor. However, the United States would not recognize the FRY as successor, because this would imply legitimacy for the principle of unilateral secession (e.g. Slovenia and Croatia). Subsequently in 1992, the Security Council retired their recognition of the FRY on the basis of the claim that the SFRY had dissolved, thus former republics of Yugoslavia could be recognized without endangering the principle of territorial integrity. See, Weller (1999), p. 214. The FRY was not admitted to UN membership until 2000, and in 2003 changed its name to Serbia and Montenegro.



FRY were articulated by claiming that Kosovo amounted to a colony of Belgrade, legitimizing Kosovar self-determination or national liberation. Second, international political contestation over Kosovo's ultimate status was likewise articulated as a question of neo-colonialism—Russia especially feared that Kosovo would become an indefinite NATO protectorate on the way to its eventual independence. Despite the fears of the Russians, however, the United States and NATO did not establish neo-colonial sovereignty over Kosovo, instead giving the UN and OSCE greater authority in the post-conflict reconstruction.

Armend Bekaj, a political adviser to the Republic of Kosovo, wrote:

[T]he emergence of the KLA should not be viewed as an isolated or single point in Kosovo's most recent history. Rather, its creation is part of the same trajectory of resistance movements that has been witnessed in Kosovo throughout the 20th century... instigated because of Belgrade's consistent state policy of occupation, colonisation, assimilation and/or forceful emigration of Albanians out of Kosovo. It was stirred into action by the need for self-determination, freedom and justice of the Albanian people, suffering under the rule of the Serbian regime. The final objective was normally defined as the life-long aspiration of unification of Kosovo with Albania.<sup>148</sup>

As early as the 1960s, Kosovar Albanians were framing their position within the SFRY as colonial. For example, a 1968 student demonstration in Priština featured the slogans "Kosovo – Republic" and "Down with colonial policy in Kosovo." A new SFRY constitution in 1974 did not grant Kosovo status as a republic, but did afford Kosovo greater autonomy (the autonomy that Belgrade would rescind in 1989). The People's Movement of Kosovo (*Lëvizja Popullore e Kosovës*, LPK), established in 1982, continued protests throughout the 1980s demanding republic status for Kosovo, and held self-determination as its ultimate aim.<sup>149</sup>

Kosovo's constitutional status within Yugoslavia was central to the Kosovar Albanian claim to be a "colonial" territory, and central to the international community sidelining

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<sup>148</sup> Bekaj (2010), p. 9.

<sup>149</sup> Bejak (2010), pp. 11–12.

Kosovo's claims relative to those of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. European states and international institutions attempting to administer the collapse of SFRY were attempting to square the circle of Slovenian and Croatian unilateral declarations of independence (and the rash German recognition of Croatia) with the principle of territorial integrity, and with the international legal principle that only colonial territories were recognized as having a legitimate right to secession. The European Community's Badinter Commission, advising the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, rejected a broader principle of self-determination put forward by the Serbs, hoping that Serb-dominated areas within Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina could themselves secede in order to join Serbia. In order to avoid granting a wider right to self-determination and avoid undermining the principle of territorial integrity, it was decided that the SFRY had not been subject to secession rather it had dissolved. The EC's interpretation was based on their reading of the SFRY constitution of 1974—the same that had granted Kosovo its autonomy within the SFRY—in which the constituent republics of the SFRY retained a right to secede.<sup>150</sup>

The constitutional structure of SFRY since 1943 recognized six republics and two autonomous territories. Ethnic groups categorized as 'nations' (*narodi*) enjoyed status as republics constituent of the SFRY. Ethnic groups categorized as 'nationalities' (*narodnosti*) were instead given autonomous territories in Serbia, not their own republics. The distinction between nation and nationality was made on the basis of an ethnicity's homeland: those with their homeland inside the SFRY were nations, but those with their homeland outside of the SFRY were nationalities. The republics were Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

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<sup>150</sup> Weller (1999), pp. 214–215. Caplan (1998), p. 747–748.

Montenegro, Macedonia, and Slovenia. The two autonomous provinces were Kosovo and Vojvodina, because Albania was treated as the homeland for Kosovar Albanians and Hungary the homeland for Vojvodina's Hungarian minority. So while the six republics had a recognized right to secede, Kosovo and Vojvodina did not. The European Community accepted this distinction that the SFRY made in 1943 between nations and nationalities when determining how to interpret the collapse of Yugoslavia. As a result, the EC rejected Kosovo's application for recognition in December 1991 when it was submitted alongside those of the Yugoslav republics other than Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>151</sup>

Despite the fact that the 1989 annulment of Kosovo's autonomy had been the spur for the cycle of competitive nationalisms that tore Yugoslavia apart, Kosovo itself was not eligible for recognition as an independent state emerging from the SFRY. Under direct administration of Kosovo from Belgrade, more than 100,000 Kosovar Albanians were removed from public jobs and the University of Priština was barred to Albanian students. This was the environment that Bekaj describes above as being labeled "apartheid" or "colonial."<sup>152</sup>

The Kosovar Albanians saw their "colonial" status as legitimizing rebellion and international intervention in support of their right to self-determination, but Russians feared that international intervention would result in NATO acquiring an imperial protectorate within the traditional Russian sphere of influence. Foreign Minister Ivanov framed Russia's opposition to the United States' policy toward the FRY and Kosovo by arguing, "In protecting today the right of Yugoslavia to sovereignty, we are protecting the future of the world and of

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<sup>151</sup> Caplan (1998), p. 748. Bakaj (2010), p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> Bekaj (2010), p. 12.

Europe against the latest form of neo-colonialism, the so-called NATO-colonialism.”<sup>153</sup> Yeltsin also made explicit warnings about turning Kosovo into a NATO protectorate. On April 9, during the bombing campaign, Yeltsin stated in interviews, “I told NATO, the Americans, the Germans, don’t push us toward military action, otherwise there will be a European war for sure, and possibly a world war. We are against this.” And in a later interview the same day, “They [NATO] want to use ground troops, take over Yugoslavia, make it their protectorate. We cannot allow this. Russia and the access to the Mediterranean Sea are nearby, so we can by no means give Yugoslavia away.”<sup>154</sup> For their part, the LDK explicitly asked for a protectorate. Kosovo’s shadow parliament, denounced as retrograde Christopher Hill’s proposals (made in the period between the Holbrooke Agreement and the Rambouillet talks), and instead affirmed continued negotiation for independence, self-determination, and the immediate formation of “an international protectorate in Kosova.”<sup>155</sup>

Critics of Western diplomacy at Rambouillet characterized the demands made upon Serbia as creating a *de facto* colonization of Kosovo through the rights granted to KFOR. Especially worrying for critics on the left was the stated intention for Kosovo’s economy to be reorganized as a market-based system. The intervention was thus “revealed” to be a neo-liberal neo-colonialism rather than a humanitarian effort.<sup>156</sup> Anti-war analysts also used the term “protectorate” as a euphemism for neo-colonialism via international organizations, whether NATO or the UN. For example, UNSCR 1244 was seen as creating a UN protectorate over Kosovo, because ultimate authority over the province rested with the UN Mission in Kosovo

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<sup>153</sup> Mendeloff (2008), p. 47.

<sup>154</sup> Hosmer (2001), p. 46n28.

<sup>155</sup> Crawford (2001-2002), p. 518.

<sup>156</sup> Bellamy (2001), pp. 35, 41.

(UNMIK).<sup>157</sup> NATO was also accused of setting up military protectorates throughout the former Yugoslavia and inside Russia's historical sphere of influence.<sup>158</sup> However, some analysts argued that the establishment of a protectorate was a sign of the UN's continuing strength and relevance: "Its responsibility in Kosovo is akin to a 1920s League of Nations mandate for a protectorate and exceeds anything the organization has done before."<sup>159</sup> Allaying Russian fears of neo-colonialism, the United States was politically disengaged with respect to post-conflict Kosovo, and, despite Russia's less equal status in KFOR, it was satisfied by the UN and OSCE predominance in post-conflict Kosovo (see below).

Formal imperial sovereignty had been eliminated before the advent of unipolarity, but neo-colonialism was still a potential political charge that defined the grievances of the Kosovar Albanians. Likewise, Russia and anti-war analysts both articulated their objections to NATO intervention in Kosovo in terms of imperialism or neo-colonialism. Unipolarity does not incline states toward the formalization of imperial relationships with restive client states, but the possibility that informal imperialism may become something more permanent still shapes states' perceptions of the stakes in internal war.

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<sup>157</sup> Bellamy (2001), p. 42. However, usage of "protectorate" was not confined to anti-war analysts, it was also used as a straightforward description of UNSCR 1244 and UNMIK—see, for example, Schnabel (2000), pp. 23, 37.

<sup>158</sup> "Kosovo, where Western powers launched military attacks ostensibly for humanitarian purposes without UN endorsement and, for the first time, established a protectorate within a sovereign state with ground forces, may be the first of post-Cold War Western interventions that increase the number of pseudo-states in the world system. ...[T]he Croatian reaction [to a poll on an EU replacement for NATO] reflects the uncertainties of a Europe without NATO as a substantial part of the Balkans currently resides under its protectorate status. ...In the view of many Russians, NATO is engaged in setting up a series of military protectorates (Bosnia, Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo), thus edging into Russia's historic zone of influence." O'Loughlin and Kolossov (2002), pp. 582, 586, 588. "The predominant trend in the Balkans is a NATOization of the region, a proliferation of nonviable states or protectorates that cannot exist without foreign military support." Arbatova (2001), p. 71.

<sup>159</sup> Daalder and O'Hanlon (1999), p. 135.

### *INSTITUTIONAL NEW STATE REGIME*

The structuring effect of unipolarity on the politics of new state creation was visible in the contestation over the European institutional security structure. Unlike multipolarity, in which the threat of formal imperialism made a zone of exclusion (the Monroe Doctrine) the international political solution to the problem of new state creation, or bipolarity, in which the 'global civil war' requires the informal imperialism of domestic political neutralization within newly created states, unipolarity has allowed the international institutions formerly hamstrung by bipolarity to be used to attend to questions of sovereignty, state-building, and security. The struggle over the proper institution to deal with the Yugoslav crises in diplomatic, military, or reconstruction capacities reflected the anxiety of the former great powers adjusting to unipolarity. At stake in the choice of international institution to steward post-war Kosovo was the possibility of its secession from the FRY, but also the security architecture of the post-Cold War era. The United States had an interest in maintaining the primacy of NATO in questions of European security and possible out-of-area operations. The European powers were of mixed opinions regarding their position within NATO, both understanding its necessity but also wary of the extent of their dependence on the United States.<sup>160</sup> Russian interests lay in attempting to move Europe away from NATO, which they increasingly realized would never include them, toward international institutions where they had a real voice: the CSCE/OSCE or UN.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Ong (2003), pp. 90–91.

<sup>161</sup> "…Russia at least sought to preserve a controlling role for itself in the further administration of the crisis. This was to be achieved by retaining the involvement in the crisis of collective bodies in which it was represented, and where it could block decisions requiring consensus. These bodies are the Contact Group itself, composed of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany and Russia; the OSCE, which furnishes a further layer of institutional authority and which still acts principally under the consensus principle, despite its membership of over fifty; and, finally, the UN Security Council, where Russia enjoys veto powers." Weller (1999), p. 212. See also, Antonenko (1999-2000), pp. 125, 126. Rontoyanni (2002), pp. 815–816.

Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin attempted to make either the CSCE or the UN the focal institution for the management of Yugoslavia. Gorbachev's visions of the Common European Home and the 'new world order' saw a new institutional order for Europe once the ideological divisions had been transcended. Importantly, a Common European Home would see the dissolution of both the Warsaw Pact and NATO, to be replaced by a new European security architecture.<sup>162</sup> As early as 1991, Gorbachev was urging a central role for the CSCE in conflict resolution for Yugoslavia, specifically to prevent the partition of the country.<sup>163</sup> Following the CSCE/OSCE's role in peace-building in Bosnia, Russia especially favored the OSCE's involvement in Kosovo.<sup>164</sup> Russian emphasis on the OSCE was less about the practical suitability of the organization for conflict resolution, and more about the post-Cold War institutional architecture of European security.<sup>165</sup>

Russian domestic politics featured even more strident contrasts between NATO and the OSCE. In 1998 during the run-up to NATO use of force in Kosovo, Russian Duma Chairman Gennady Seleznyov said that the Duma would breach the NATO-Russian Founding

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<sup>162</sup> Sarotte (2009), pp. 105–106. Cottey (2009), p. 598. Mitrofanova (1998), p. 129. See also, Antonenko (1999–2000), pp. 129, 130. Gorbachev spoke directly about what he perceived to be mutually exclusive security structures for the post-Cold War era: "Instead of prioritizing the creation of European structures, creating a security council for the CSCE, its own peacekeeping force etc., and subsequently looking into the possibility of using NATO structures in that context, the factors are being inverted and NATO, which was created for purposes of the Cold War, is being extended, quite apart from everything else. Is this merely an error? I fear something more serious, a prolongation of the old logic of supremacy that the West is continuing to impose." Cross (2001), pp. 5–6.

<sup>163</sup> Sulejmanović (2008), p. 15.

<sup>164</sup> Schnabel (2000), p. 29.

<sup>165</sup> "This struggle for influence among the states of the Contact Group was also reflected in the second aspect of the changing role of international actors: namely, the functions and authority of the relevant international organizations or mechanisms themselves. The previous episodes in the Yugoslav crisis had demonstrated that the much-vaunted new 'European security architecture' was more myth than reality. The attempt to achieve a settlement for Kosovo once again reopened the struggle for pre-eminence between the OSCE, which Russia considers to be the principal focus of authority in relation to peace and security in Europe, the EU and its as yet feeble attempts to establish a security identity, and the aim of the United States and United Kingdom to preserve the dominant role of NATO." Weller (1999), p. 212.

Act if force were used in Kosovo, while reiterating that the OSCE was the preferred mechanism for resolving the crisis.<sup>166</sup> By 1999, Gorbachev was writing that NATO had precipitated a military intervention and sabotaged European multilateral efforts in order to demonstrate that the UN and OSCE were ineffective.<sup>167</sup>

UNSCR 1160, passed in March 1998, emphasized that a resolution to the Kosovo crisis should be in accordance with UN and OSCE standards. In October, a Russian high-level delegation visited Milošević and enjoined him to cooperate with the OSCE in order to avoid NATO involvement. By mid-October, Milošević had come to an agreement with Holbrooke that included the introduction of an OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, authorized by UNSCR 1203.<sup>168</sup> The political (not practical) nature of the OSCE's involvement is made clearer by the fact that it had very little organizational capacity, no actual observers ready for such a mission, and no means or experience in providing for their own observers' security (relying on a guarantee from Milošević and a NATO extraction force).<sup>169</sup> Both the massacre at Račak and the declaration of the OSCE KVM chief as *persona non grata* occurred while the OSCE was still attempting to gather the 2000 observers required by the mission. These failures of the OSCE verifiers effectively sidelined the OSCE and UN (and thereby Russia) relative to the Contact Group and NATO in the management of the Kosovo conflict.<sup>170</sup>

Although the Kosovo War was undertaken by NATO, the post-conflict reconstruction and management of Kosovo provided another opportunity for Russia to insist on an

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<sup>166</sup> Cross (2001), p. 14.

<sup>167</sup> Tsygankov (2001), pp. 141–142.

<sup>168</sup> Sulejmanović (2008), pp. 38, 41

<sup>169</sup> Leurdijk (1999), pp. 13–15.

<sup>170</sup> Schnabel (2000), p. 43. Leurdijk (1999), p. 15. Kim (1999), p. 8. Bellamy (2001), pp. 33–34.



institutional context that it had a voice in. UNSCR 1224 spelled out the international organizations that would have different roles and competencies in Kosovo. The UN Mission in Kosovo would have full civilian administration control, under the direction of a UN Secretary-General High Representative, and a lead role for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The OSCE was empowered to engage in institution-building and human rights reporting, while the EU was to help with economic reconstruction.<sup>171</sup> Despite fears of a NATO-protectorate, the OSCE had a higher institutional position in administration of post-conflict Kosovo than KFOR or NATO.<sup>172</sup>

Ultimately, the Kosovo War may have put the OSCE into terminal crisis, precisely because of the contradicting visions of European security and state sovereignty that the war brought to the fore.<sup>173</sup> Russia's investment in the OSCE only went as far as it could provide security for sovereignty. The OSCE's impotence in the face of the Kosovo War seems to have ultimately pushed Russia to search for new or different pan-European security institutions.<sup>174</sup>

Unlike new states emerging during the Cold War, there was never a perceived need for neutralization in the case of the FRY and Kosovo. And unlike the 1800s, Russia could not

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<sup>171</sup> Sulejmanović (2008), p. 61. Schnabel (2000), pp. 38, 40.

<sup>172</sup> Bellamy (2001), p. 44. Weller (1999), p. 246.

<sup>173</sup> Webber (2009), p. 459.

<sup>174</sup> Cottey argues, "For many in the West, Kosovo was about a world that had moved beyond state sovereignty, one in which the cause of humanitarian intervention outweighed the traditional non-interventionist norms. In Russia, by contrast, OAF [Operation Allied Force] was widely viewed as a challenge to international order premised precisely on the centrality of sovereignty principles. These competing attitudes, in turn, have fed into debates on the OSCE.

"Historically, western conceptions of the OSCE have emphasized its role in defending human rights and democracy; Russian (and before that Soviet) conceptions of pan-European security, by contrast, emphasize state sovereignty as the core basis of interstate cooperation. These differences explain why Russia has, on the one hand, continued to advocate pan-European security structures but on the other has become increasingly wary of the OSCE (for example, in relation to its criticisms of Russian presidential and parliamentary elections). Interestingly, in the context of the debate over NATO's possible enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia and the 2008 Georgian war, the Russian leadership has begun to press for new pan-European security structures to replace the OSCE." Cottey (2009), p. 601.

promulgate an exclusionary regime to govern the new post-communist states in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Within unipolarity, the sole superpower manifests its disengagement through mediating institutions that allow it to hand-off engagement in the peripheries to other countries interested in sustaining the international order. Political contestation over the organizations involved in Kosovo crisis management, negotiations, intervention, and post-conflict reconstruction reflected the way in which new states are managed within unipolarity. Which institutions were predominant in dealing with Kosovo held significant political import for the involved countries, because institutional alignment is perceived to indicate the trajectory of a country toward or away from the order sponsored by the unipolar power.

#### *SUMMARY*

Unipolarity structures the institution of sovereignty and the international politics of new state creation differently than multipolarity or bipolarity. The grievances of the Kosovars and the objections of the Russians demonstrate that the politics of (neo-)colonialism remained significant to the political understanding of secession and new state creation, despite decolonization having formally been completed during the Cold War. Polarity structures the international politics of new state creation through its effects on interests, ideology, and the relative effectiveness of formal vs. informal imperialism, and thus the politics of new state creation within unipolarity are substantially different from that seen in multipolarity or bipolarity. Whereas multipolarity and bipolarity have inbuilt structural conflict between the great powers or superpowers, unipolarity does not feature inherent structural conflict, which allowed international institutions the ability to effectively act in a way that they could not during bipolarity. Nevertheless, the choice of institutions to deal with internal wars both

diplomatically and in post-conflict reconstruction was an indication of the security architecture of the post-Cold War period and of the potential alignment of a state. The contestation between the United States, Europe, and Russia over the appropriate institutions—the UN, OSCE, or NATO—had at stake the future alignment of Kosovo and the willingness of the unipolar power to accept constraints upon its actions.

## **Conclusions**

The Kosovo War gives strong support to the patterns predicted by theory. Unipolarity structures not only the interests of the external powers weighing intervention, but also the ability of internal factions to negotiate support. The United States, Europe, and Russia had few intrinsic interests in Kosovo. The broader interests of the viability of the NATO alliance and of asserting an international order that would not tolerate flouting human rights in the face of Western exhortations and threats drove the NATO intervention into the Kosovo conflict. Unipolarity structured the character of the diplomatic and military intervention in Kosovo: the United States was politically disengaged, circumvented the institutions it was ostensibly defending, took on the lion's share of the military operations despite not planning a military or political strategy, and conceded to Europe, Russia, and Milošević most of the political resolution in the negotiated termination of the conflict and post-conflict reconstruction.

Unipolarity also structures the way in which ideology matters when considering the role of international politics in internal wars. Ideology was less important both regionally and transnationally in affecting alliance formation among the various factions in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and neighboring countries. Nor was ideology particularly important in affecting the motivation of great powers to intervene, their willingness to maintain the

intervention for ideological objectives, their willingness to back ideologically-like factions, or in harmonizing the interests of ideologically-like great powers. Both Milošević and the KLA had communist ideological backgrounds, but neither employed these to gain external support. Russia still had a significant communist party, but their interest in Yugoslavia was framed not in ideological terms but in ethno-religious terms. The liberalism of United States and Europe did not lead to them imposing an ideological anti-communist interpretation on the Kosovo War, but liberalism did play some role in motivating their humanitarian intervention. However, liberal goals took a lower priority than other goals in determining the means of intervention and the regime outcome negotiated. Within unipolarity, ideology is not an effective signaling strategy, either of foreign policy objectives or of factional alignment with external powers.

Finally, Kosovo demonstrates the effect of unipolarity in creating a proclivity toward informal imperialism as opposed to formal colonial relationships with the periphery, although neo-colonialism was feared as a potential outcome by Russia. The case of Kosovo illustrated the politics of newly created states, state-building projects, and secessionist movements within unipolarity. The international institutional environment in which sovereignty is negotiated and legitimized reflects the conditions of possibility created by a unipolar distribution of power, the de-ideologization of international politics, and the effectiveness of informal imperialism. The case of Kosovo further illustrates the unwillingness of the sole superpower to remain politically engaged or to accept the constraints of international institutions.

The evidence of the decision-making concerns of the parties to the Kosovo War indicates that the broader patterns found in the quantitative data are likely being generated by the causal processes predicted by the theory.

## Conclusion

### CHAPTER SEVEN

[T]he external existence of state and people is regarded as a fixed and immutable quality. Interest has tended to center on social changes that occur within this set framework, changes that are then deemed responsible for the alterations of political institutions. This is, in effect, to wrench each single state from the context in which it was formed; the state is seen in isolation, exclusive in itself, without raising the question whether its peculiar character is co-determined by its relation to its surroundings.

—Otto Hintze, “The Formation of States and Constitutional Development” (1902)

Civil war changes. We readily accept that the state has changed, and that its varying nature has as much to do with its external environment as with its internal social development. As the state changes, ‘war’ and ‘intervention’ change along with it.<sup>1</sup> Civil wars also change as a reflection of the array of forces around their polity. Athenian empire and the descent of Athenian democracy into *stasis* were engendered by the place of Hellas in Persia’s shadow. The Crisis of the Roman Republic – the Servile Wars, Social Wars, and Civil Wars – and the Republic’s degeneration into the Empire were the fruits of Rome’s ascent over Gaul, Pontus,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘State,’ ‘war,’ and ‘intervention’ mutually define each other. The Ancient Greek word for ‘war’ – as a concept of organized violence distinguishable from piracy, frontier skirmishes, raids and pillaging – depends on a prior understanding of the *polis*. Manicas (1982), pp. 674–675. “By focusing on intervention practices, it is possible to identify examples of what forms of doing – state practices – constitute legitimate forms of being. By analyzing interventions which occurred at different historical periods, it is possible to get indications of how ... sovereignty and statehood have changed.” Weber (1995), p. 4

Cilicia, and Parthia. The balance of power has affected civil war not only in small states in the shadow of the great powers, but also the course of civil war within the great powers themselves. Athens and Rome were as different from each other as they are from the Italian city-state, the early absolutist state, and the modern state—all different political forms whose production and reproduction depended on certain external conditions of security—and the most important lesson from reading Thucydides, Caesar, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, and Schmitt is that civil wars are not transhistorical, but each reflects their period and state's place in world politics.

We began with the question: does international politics have a decisive impact on domestic conflict? Can internal war be understood without knowledge of its place in international politics? The theory and evidence developed in this dissertation have aimed to convince the reader that the incidence and character of civil war are products of international politics just as much as they are products of domestic politics, and that as international politics changes, civil war changes as well. Seeking to understand civil war as a phenomenon that is stable over history and that exhibits continuity in its causes can only be misleading. Instead we must strive to understand what kind of changes to international politics will alter the civil wars we confront, which lessons about civil wars from the past will no longer guide us, and how our present civil wars are unique relative to those that came before. This study has sought to provide a satisfying explanation for the international politics of civil war over the past two hundred years, and a way to predict what changes to civil war may come.

The concluding chapter proceeds as follows. The first section summarizes the theory presented by this dissertation, the findings from the quantitative analysis of internal war data, and the findings from the case studies, including a brief across-case comparison. The second

section addresses the limitations of the data, case studies, and theoretical approach. The third section discusses implications for theory and future research. And, the fourth section derives policy implications for the United States.

## **System Theory & Internal War**

The theory developed by this dissertation is derived from and extends structural realism's claims about the structure of international politics. The three aims of this theory were to develop 1) why international politics has a significant effect on internal war, 2) how the structure of international politics affects the patterns and character of internal war, and 3) how different distributions of power result in different outcomes for civil war.

System theory was employed to analyze the relationship between international politics and internal wars because of its parsimony. With fewer assumptions, the explanatory leverage is greater at the expense of descriptive accuracy. Each country's unique circumstances, culture, history, identity, domestic politics, economic system, values, and practices are excluded in order to focus on a small number of key elements. Parsimony allows a theory with the geographic and historical breadth of this study to be developed, for such a theory could not remain coherent if it attempted to include the all factors that descriptive accuracy demanded of it.<sup>2</sup> And by establishing a baseline of expected outcomes for internal wars during each period, one can better assess the uniqueness of each individual case relative to the other civil conflicts of its time.

Starting from the same three assumptions as Kenneth Waltz's structural realism – the state is the constitutive actor of international politics, anarchy is the principle of organization between states, and capabilities are distributed across the states in the system – we explained,

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<sup>2</sup> Expanse exists at the expense of coherence: "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself, (I am large, I contain multitudes.)" Whitman (2001), p. 113.

like Waltz, how different distributions of power led to different dynamics for international politics. Structural realist theory argues that *among great powers* multipolarity is unstable and that bipolarity is stable. However, the theory presented here finds the opposite when structural realism is applied to relations *between great powers and the periphery*: multipolarity is the most stable, whereas bipolarity is the most destabilizing.

This theory relies on three core characteristics of polarity and its effects on international politics. First, polarities can either be inherently conflictual or potentially conflictual. Multipolarity and bipolarity, because there are peer rivals in each, are *inherently* conflictual distributions of power. Unipolarity is *potentially* conflictual, because there are no peer competitors but the possibility of a rising challenger exists. Whether conflict is inherent in the polarity of the system affects the stakes that great powers perceive in conflicts and the type of conflict terminations that are possible, among other implications.

Second, polarities can be more or less complex, depending on the number of peers that are involved in the balance. Balancing in multipolarity can be very complex, as alliances are often flexible, changing, and difficult to assess. Balancing in bipolarity is clearer and more direct, as each superpower only has one peer rival. Balancing in unipolarity, if it occurs at all, is about potential challenge, because there is no peer rival for the superpower to contend with. Intra-core “relations” are simple: there is only one superpower.

Third, the number of great powers affects perceptions of who stands to gain from a particular event in the periphery—more great powers, more potentially interested parties, fewer great powers, fewer to gain from a given outcome. When a regime faces the threat of revolution or secession, other states see their interests at stake in the result—is the defeat of the regime



weakening or strengthening their position, and is the new government going to align with their interests or not? During multipolarity, there are several great powers with the capability of intervening near or abroad, meaning that many actors need to assess whether an outcome will favor them, an allied power, or a rival power. Because calculating the balance can be difficult,<sup>3</sup> and because alliances can shift to accommodate changes to the balance of power, it can be unclear if any given country will decisively gain from an outcome in the periphery. During bipolarity, outcomes appear Manichaeian because there are only two superpowers, giving both superpowers a clear zero-sum perception that their loss is their rival's gain. During unipolarity, outcomes can also be unclear, as it is difficult to determine whether a country gaining from a given event might become a future peer competitor to the superpower.

The above three characteristics of the distribution of power – conflictual structure, core complexity, and valence of events – are inherent to any international system capable of being defined by polarity. From these basic features of the distribution of power, we can derive the structuring effect of polarity upon the mechanisms linking internal war and international politics: strategic interests, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty.

- *Freedom of maneuver:* Multipolarity's core complexity and unclear valence of events combine to give peripheral actors a broad freedom to maneuver between external powers for support. Bipolarity is not complex, and the clear either/or choice between two superpowers limits freedom of actors to realign when seeking support. Unipolarity is also not complex, because there is only one superpower possessing

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<sup>3</sup> Morgenthau (1993), Chapter 14.

global reach capabilities, but since gains from events in the periphery are unclear, peripheral actors have little hand to play.

- *Periphery relationship:* The conflict inherent in and complexity of each polarity creates different proclivities toward the periphery. The high complexity of multipolarity led competing great powers to seek stability in the periphery in order to better manage the balance. The sharp conflict between superpowers conversely led to the export of instability to the peripheries in order to avoid a direct clash. The low stakes and lack of competition perceived in the periphery during unipolarity leads to superpower disengagement.
- *Intervention type:* The distinctive mode of intervention characteristic of each polarity is closely related to the relationship of the great powers toward the periphery. To stabilize the periphery, great powers during multipolarity almost exclusively intervened on the side of the state, and did so multilaterally if multiple powers intervened in the same conflict. Conversely, superpowers in bipolarity engaged in proxy wars, intervening against each other's partisans in peripheral conflicts. The disengagement of the superpower during unipolarity results in interventions undertaken with diffuse or weak interests (e.g. humanitarian intervention) or interventions mediated by institutions (e.g. NATO or the UN).
- *Duration:* Likewise, the typical internal war duration in each period is linked to the type of periphery relationship and the intervention type. Multipolarity features shorter internal wars, as great powers intervene to put down rebellions. Bipolarity features more frequent extended civil wars, because external powers on both sides

intervene early and obstinately to sustain their clients or partisans against defeat.

Unipolarity features neither proclivity, although the general disengagement of the superpower leads to earlier withdrawals.

- *Termination type:* The conflict inherent in the distribution of power strongly affects the conditions of possibility for military vs. negotiated termination of internal wars. Multipolarity and bipolarity are inherently conflictual structures, and military terminations are the predominant type of settlement, but for different reasons in each. The great powers in multipolarity tend to favor military victories as the quickest and most permanent way of restoring order in the peripheries. The counterintervening superpowers of bipolarity undermine the possibility for negotiated terminations by playing the spoiler and supporting partisans that might otherwise come to the negotiating table out of exhaustion. Unipolarity's disengaged superpower allows ostensibly disinterested international institutions to mediate, although occasionally external powers will intervene to prevent a military victory or to serve as a third-party guarantor for negotiated settlements.
- *Ideology as signal / ideology and duration:* In both aspects, ideology serves to magnify the existing structural proclivities of different polarities. Multipolarity features an unclear valence to outcomes in the periphery and shorter conflict durations. Transnational political ideology during multipolarity resulted in similar outcomes: the presence of ideology did not significantly overcome the indeterminacy of alignment, although it did result in shorter civil wars. In bipolarity, the zero-sum clarity of outcomes and the proclivity toward longer wars were both amplified by

the presence of ideology. And in the unipolar era, without a rival great power to sponsor a competing ideology, the presence of ideology in a given internal war has an indeterminate effect.

- *Imperialism*: The viability/desirability of formal or informal imperialism in the periphery is also derivable from the structural characteristics of different polarities. The relationship that the core has toward the peripheries, the clarity of who stands to gain from events, and the freedom of maneuver possessed by peripheral actors combine to incline great powers toward or away from formal imperialism. Great powers during multipolarity seek stability in the peripheries, but face difficulty ascertaining who might benefit from the actions of clients that have a broad ability to seek support from rival great powers. Formal imperialism served to clarify and stabilize their relationship with peripheral areas. Informal imperialism was viable during bipolarity because peripheral alignment is much easier to discern, especially when a superpower's co-ideological partisans are involved. In unipolarity, informal imperialism is also viable, because although the valence of events in the periphery can be unclear, the freedom of maneuver and lack of great power competitors allows the sole superpower greater leeway in deciding upon the terms of its engagement with clients.
- *New state regime*: Great powers in each period attempt to construct a regime to manage newly created states as objects of international competition, but each regime is a reflection of the structural proclivities that emerge from the distribution of power. There is an incentive to create formal imperial relationships in the

peripheries during multipolarity. But since domestic regime type can be an indeterminate sign of alignment and peripheral actors enjoy broad flexibility in their relations with great powers, a regime of exclusion attempts to restrict great power imperialism in the expectation that new states are unlikely to permanently align in a way that will decisively hurt any power's interests. During bipolarity, alignment can be much clearer, especially when ideology is a factor, and given the incentives to preemptively intervene and counterintervene to change a country's alignment, a regime of neutralization attempts to remove new states from contention by internally balancing their politics. Finally, the disengaged superpower during unipolarity can internationalize the management of new states through regional or international institutions, especially because the sole superpower does not have a peer competitor that might be able to decisively exclude superpower influence within a new state.

Putting the foregoing together, we can array the expected effects of the three different polarities against each other. The following table allows the reader to see what system-level characteristics for each polarity produce as they constrain actor interests, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty. The differing expectations for the character of internal war can then be compared across polarities:

	Multipolarity	Bipolarity	Unipolarity
<b>System</b>			
Conflict inherent / Stakes	Medium	High	Low
Core complexity	High	Low	Low
Valence of events	Unclear	Clear	Unclear
<b>Interests</b>			
Freedom of maneuver	High	Medium	Low
Periphery relationship	Stability preference	Instability export	Disengagement
Intervention type	Antirevolutionary/ multilateral	Counterintervention	Arms length/ humanitarian
Duration	Shorter	Longer	Indeterminate
Termination type	Military	Military	Negotiated
<b>Ideology</b>			
Ideology as signal	Indeterminate	Effective	Indeterminate
Ideology and duration	Shorter	Longer	Indeterminate
<b>Sovereignty</b>			
Imperialism	Formal	Informal	Informal
New state regime	Exclusion	Neutralization	Internationalization

From structural realism's basic assumptions, we took inherent characteristics of the different distributions of power, and then derived expectations about how polarity would structure the mechanisms linking internal war and international politics. Different polarities each produced a different pattern and character of internal war, and a resulting set of hypotheses that could then be tested.

*Multipolarity* is hypothesized to produce the most conservative character for internal war. The great powers maintained a stability preference toward the peripheries, and so the multipolar period saw the lowest rate of onset, the shortest average duration, infrequent intervention, and low average battle deaths despite military victory (as opposed to negotiated peace) being the principal mode of terminating conflicts. Ideological conflicts during multipolarity were shorter than non-ideological conflicts. And, despite creation of almost seventy new states during this period, "weak" new states did not contribute significantly to the

overall onset of civil war. Nor did they attract many external interventions, in part due to the regime of exclusion that the great powers attempted to maintain.

*Bipolarity* is hypothesized to produce the most intense environment for internal war. The superpower standoff led to the export of instability to the peripheries, and so the bipolar period saw the highest rate of onset, intervention, longest average duration, and highest average battle deaths. Ideology in bipolarity had the opposite effect that it had during multipolarity, increasing the duration, battle deaths, and external interventions. Almost ninety new states were created over the course of the second wave of decolonization. New states created during bipolarity were more prone to internal conflict than those created during multipolarity or unipolarity, despite superpower attempts to preemptively neutralize key states.

*Unipolarity* is hypothesized to produce a permissive environment for internal war, neither conservative nor extreme, characterized principally by the attempted depoliticization of the periphery. Onsets, duration, battle deaths, and interventions all lay between the lows of multipolarity and the highs of bipolarity. The proportion of negotiated peace accords and ceasefires doubles in unipolarity relative to military victories. This is accompanied by a precipitous drop in the number of ideological conflicts. And despite the concern over “weak” states in the post-Cold War era, new states created during unipolarity have been no more or less prone to collapse into civil war. The few newly created states have been managed by international or regional institutions.

In sum, the theory advanced by this dissertation explained how and why the structure of international politics affects the broad patterns of internal war and its character over time. Great power interests, internal faction interests, the interests and identities created by

transnational political ideology, and the unique circumstances faced by waves of new states are all aspects of international politics that affect the character of internal war. The practical effect of each of these elements is structured by the distribution of power in the international system. Thus, a convincing theory of internal war requires an understanding of the structural constraints within which internal wars occur.

## **Quantitative findings**

Analysis of the Gleditsch dataset on internal wars yielded strong confirmation of the theory's hypotheses regarding the patterns and character of internal war over the past 200 years. In order to compare across periods of the balance of power, the data was divided into three groups by polarity: Multipolarity from 1816–1943, Bipolarity from 1944–1990; and, Unipolarity from 1991–2010. We were then able to describe the key changes, and whether or not they were congruent with the theory. Finally, inferential statistical tests were used as an additional method of confirming or disconfirming differences across periods.

The chart of the overall incidence of internal war shows several distinct historical peaks, but the dominant feature of the chart occurs during the bipolar period. The overall incidence of ongoing internal wars ramps up to two-and-a-half times the highest peak in either multipolarity or unipolarity. At its height, there were 18 ongoing internal wars in 1989, right as the Cold War was ending. When bipolarity gave way to unipolarity, there was an even steeper dropoff in incidence, returning the world to pre-Cold War levels of ongoing internal conflict.

The first piece of this puzzle is the rate of onset. What the data shows is that multipolarity only saw an average of about 1.2 new internal wars per year. Bipolarity and unipolarity were significantly higher, at 2.28 and 2.8 onsets per year, respectively. This might



explain why multipolarity did not see the same level of overall incidence that bipolarity exhibited, but if unipolarity had a higher rate of onset compared with bipolarity, then why did we see a sharp decline in incidence?

In order to understand what accounted for the low onset rate in multipolarity, we looked at two confounding factors, two sides of the same coin: colonial wars and system membership. One can conceive of wars of the colonized against their colonizers as conflicts over sovereignty in much the same way that secessionist conflicts are civil wars. When we combined intra-state onsets with extra-state onsets, the gap between multipolarity and the other two periods began to close. Multipolarity had an average of about 2 onsets per year, while bipolarity had 2.62 and unipolarity had 3.05. On the other hand, we know intuitively that as the number of states in the system increases, the number of countries that could experience a civil war also increases. The number of states in the system rose from about 40 following the Peace of Vienna to about 170 today (excluding microstates). When controlled for system membership, the rate of intra-state onsets per year looks different across polarities: 2.1% during multipolarity, 1.9% during bipolarity, and 1.7% during unipolarity. These are not major differences in practical terms, but they do put in perspective the seeming trough of onsets during multipolarity.

The next question that arose was whether the 184 new states created since Vienna were driving the patterns of onset and incidence. New states are generally

	Multi	Bi	Uni
New-state-years as a % of all state-years	14.3%	24%	11%
New state wars as a % of all intra-state wars	7.7%	18.7%	8.9%
New state wars as a % of new states created	17.4%	22.5%	19.2%

considered weaker than established states, because it takes time to institutionalize and build

capacity. But the data showed that new states were less prone to fall into internal war than established states. We analyzed onsets in terms of state-years, counting one state-year for every state, every year—40 states over two years would yield 80 state-years. New-state-years were defined as the first 15 years following a state's independence, thereafter being counted as normal state-years. Then we compared the rate of onset during new-state-years and during all other state-years. If new states were weaker than established states, we would expect to see more new state wars (as a percentage of all internal wars) than new-state-years (as a percentage of all state-years). But the opposite is the case: in each period, the percentage of new state wars is lower than we would expect if new states experienced onset at the same rate as established states, and the difference is especially stark in multipolarity. We also found that there are differences across periods in terms of the percentage of new states that fall into internal conflict: during bipolarity, about 30% more new states experienced an internal war than during multipolarity. Furthermore, nearly two-and-a-half times as many internal wars during bipolarity were new state wars as compared to multipolarity (18.7% vs. 7.7% respectively), despite bipolarity featuring only one-and-a-half times the proportion of new states as a percentage of all states (24% vs. 14.3%).

Duration was the next piece of the puzzle in understanding the overall picture of internal war incidence over the past 200 years. Here the differences across polarities are stark. The average internal war during multipolarity was about 1 year 10 months, while during bipolarity the mean duration rose to about 3 years 10 months, and unipolarity saw an average of about 2 years 2 months. Both multipolarity and unipolarity saw a majority of civil wars end in 2 years or less, but during bipolarity over half lasted for more than 2 years. More than onsets, it

appears that duration was principal cause of the steadily increasing incidence of ongoing internal war that we observed during the Cold War.

Amplifying this effect was the interaction between ideology and polarity. Ideology on its own does not seem to affect internal war duration: ideological and non-ideological civil wars over the past 200 years all lasted an average of about 2 years 7 months. But the numbers indicate that polarity has a significant structuring effect on the impact of ideology on duration. Particularly bipolarity and multipolarity showed significant deviations when ideology was a factor. During multipolarity, ideological civil wars were much shorter at 1 year and 4 months, whereas during bipolarity, ideological civil wars were much longer at 4 years on average. The introduction of ideology seems to amplify the divergence of internal war durations already noted above (non-ideological wars during multipolarity are still shorter than during multipolarity, but the average difference of 7 months between them is not as significant). In order to examine whether the difference in duration between multipolarity and bipolarity was due to the shift in polarity or due to the shift from liberalism to Marxism as the revolutionary ideology of choice, we tested a subperiod of multipolarity from 1905–1943 when Marxist and other extreme ideologies became more prominent. But the results remained essentially the same: 1 year 3 months was the average duration of conflicts during the subperiod of multipolarity. The final aspect of ideology that shows a dramatic difference across periods is the proportion of ideological conflicts. Sixty to seventy percent of internal wars during multipolarity and bipolarity featured an ideological component, but that rate drops precipitously to just under twenty percent during unipolarity.

The third piece of the puzzle in understanding the long-term pattern of internal war incidence lies in terminations. The most striking feature that emerges from the data is the massive spike in terminations in 1991–1992 following the end of bipolarity. Fourteen conflicts were resolved in that two-year span, twice the number of any other spike over the past 200 years. All the long duration conflicts that had built up over the course of the Cold War were suddenly capable of being resolved as superpower support was withdrawn, ideological fervor moderated, and international institutions could finally function as mediators. And as bipolarity's passing allowed for conflicts to be terminated, the advent of unipolarity made it possible to resolve these conflicts through negotiation or ceasefires instead of military victories. During bipolarity, 80% of conflicts were terminated through military victory, but immediately upon the shift to unipolarity, negotiation or ceasefire resolved 75% of internal wars.

Finally, in examining the connection between international politics and internal war, the effect of direct interventions must be examined. The Gleditsch dataset counts 19 conflicts during multipolarity that featured a direct intervention, whereas bipolarity had 31, and unipolarity had 13. Of course, it makes more sense to compare the rate of intervention per conflict across periods: multipolarity at 12.3% of conflicts featuring an intervention, bipolarity at 29%, and unipolarity at 24.5%. But again, the era of imperialism appears to have been creating a seeming trough of great power activity in the peripheries. If one accepts that great powers intervening in their colonies to put down rebellions is similar enough to a great power intervention into an internal war in the peripheries, then when those two categories of data are combined, the dearth of activity during multipolarity disappears. Each period features an average of one internal war intervention or extra-state war onset per year.

Intervention does have a significant relationship with duration regardless of polarity: internal wars last 2 years 4 months, while internationalized civil wars extend to 3 years 5 months. Recall also that bipolarity lengthens internal wars, and the interaction between bipolarity and intervention results in wars that last an average of 3 years 10 months. Intervention does not have the same amplifying effect on duration during multipolarity or unipolarity, which suggests that it is the bipolar era that drives the overall figure for intervention's effect on duration. Further, while ideological civil wars attract intervention slightly more than non-ideological conflicts (21.4% vs. 18%), the interaction between ideology and bipolarity creates a much greater incentive to intervene: ideological wars during bipolarity attract an intervention at a rate of 33.3%, compared to all other internal wars in which only 15.6% see a direct intervention.

One might also expect intervention and battle deaths to be systematically related, interventions causing more deaths, or perhaps more bloody internal wars attracting interventions. However, the data showed that when duration is controlled for, battle deaths have no relationship to intervention, to the interaction between intervention and polarity, to polarity by itself, to the interaction between ideology and polarity, or to ideology by itself. Across all periods, battle deaths appear to be principally driven by the duration of the internal war. Insofar as polarity, ideology, and intervention affect duration, they will affect battle deaths, but none of these factors appear to have an independent effect of their own.

Using changes to the structure of the international system to analyze the past two hundred years worth of data on internal war provides powerful answers to the puzzle that this chapter began with: why does the incidence of internal war appear to follow the major turning

points of international politics? If internal war were a wholly internal phenomenon – its character determined by domestic material factors and domestic politics – then this pattern of incidence would have to be an improbable and misleading coincidence. But the historical record seems to point toward a substantial role for international politics in shaping the patterns and character of internal war. In order to more convincingly determine whether the theory's hypothesized mechanisms were producing the patterns found in the data, we performed three in-depth case studies.

### **Case study findings and comparison**

The quantitative analysis of internal war data proved congruent with the theory's expectations, but the correlations and differences we find across polarities do not necessarily establish that the hypothesized causal relationships are at work. Three case studies – 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war, 1959–1975 Laotian civil war, and 1998–1999 Kosovo War – were used to interrogate the historical record and trace the processes generating different outcomes.

The three case studies were selected to allow for across-case comparison, and to allow for examination of the effects of the structuring effect of polarity (the condition variable) on all three causal forces linking international politics to internal war (the independent variables: security interests, transnational political ideology, and the institution of sovereignty). One case from each of three periods of the balance of power – multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity – was selected so that across-case comparisons of the condition variable could be made. These cases had to have similar values across the independent variables—because it was the effect of the conditional variable that interested us, the independent variables needed to be held as constant as is possible. Each case therefore featured: great power extrinsic interests in the

conflict; internal faction appeals for support; a limited intervention; an ideological aspect; decolonization, recolonization, or neo-colonialism as an issue; and, the politics surrounding newly created states. The cases were selected to have intermediate values for the independent variables, especially regarding intervention. This allowed us to better discern whether the conditional variable was magnifying or mitigating the effects of the independent variables.

### *URUGUAY*

The case of the 1843–1851 Uruguayan civil war featured a limited intervention—a defensive blockade—by two great power members of the Concert of Europe, France and Britain. The threat of intervention from Brazil or the United States was also significant to the politics surrounding Uruguay’s conflict. Second, there was a transnational ideological division between the more liberal Colorado party and the conservative populist Blanco party and their respective allies in Argentina and Brazil. And third, Uruguay and Argentina were states created by the Spanish decolonization of Latin America and were both engaged in state-building projects that were continuations of the immediate post-colonial political context. Moreover, Uruguay invited the serious possibility of recolonization by France or Britain. These features of the Uruguayan case gave us the ability to test all three independent variables during multipolarity: how multipolarity affected the security interests of internal and external powers; how multipolarity affected the significance of transnational political ideology; and, how multipolarity created a proclivity towards formalization of imperial relationships.

The Uruguayan civil war gave strong support to the outcomes predicted by theory. Multipolarity structured not only the interests of the external powers weighing intervention, but also the ability of internal factions to negotiate support. The pressing need maintain great power alliances during this period drove Britain and France to find a project to cooperate on—

this is how the relatively minor conflict in Uruguay became the object of international politics. Parties to the conflict, especially the Argentine dictator Rosas, enjoyed the wide freedom of maneuver in seeking external support we expected from multipolarity. Uruguay did deviate from the theory's expectations in one instance, because the intervention did not produce a short conflict. The mode of intervention was not decisive, but simply a naval blockade, which served to lengthen the war rather than shorten it, because neither intervening party had a clear objective other than to cooperate with the other great power. Otherwise, the intervention did meet expectations: it was a multilateral intervention with all the great powers intervening on the same side in support of the state against the rebels.

Ideology was not important in affecting the motivation of great powers to intervene in Uruguay, their willingness to maintain the intervention for ideological objectives, their willingness to support ideologically-like factions, or in harmonizing the interests of ideologically-like great powers. Britain, France, and the United States were all liberal or republican states, but disagreed fundamentally on whether intervention was appropriate, which internal factions to support, and what goals ought to be achieved before abandoning intervention. Within multipolarity, ideology was not an effective signaling strategy, either of foreign policy objectives or of factional alignment with external powers. Finally, Uruguay demonstrated the effect of multipolarity in creating a proclivity toward the formalization of core-periphery relationships. Recolonization was a viable option as perceived both by internal factions and by external powers seeking to overcome persistent internal conflict. The unclear valence of newly decolonized states and their state-building projects increased the uncertainty that great powers faced when weighing an intervention. The case of Uruguay gave strong



support for the theory's contention that intra-state and extra-state conflicts should be viewed in terms of continuity rather than as wholly separate phenomena.

### *LAOS*

The case of the 1959–1975 Laotian civil war featured counterinterventions by the United States and Soviet Union, limited by their fears of escalation and by the international political commitments both made to Laotian neutrality. Both supplied aid, materiel, organizational assistance, logistics, intelligence, and political cover, and in the case of the U.S. a substantial degree of air support. The civil war featured an ideological division between a communist faction and a rightwing royalist faction. This case also featured a neutralist faction, which allowed us to demonstrate more clearly the role of ideology in binding internal factions to external powers, and the increasing ideological polarization as civil wars went on during bipolarity. Laos along with Vietnam and Cambodia were states created by French decolonization of Indochina, and all three were made the objects of international contestation before their state-building projects could even begin. As such, many of the roots of the Laotian civil war and its relationship with the Vietnam War lie in their post-colonial status, and in the fear of neo-colonialism, absorption, or annexation.

The interests of internal factions seeking support and external powers weighing intervention in Laos were significantly shaped by the bipolar distribution of power. Despite both Khrushchev and Kennedy realizing that Laos was too small and distant to warrant the risk of escalation, they nevertheless intervened and intensified the internal war. Earlier, the Eisenhower administration very clearly viewed the conflict in terms of zero-sum thinking and the potential for escalation, given Laos' role in the promulgation of the domino theory. Laos was viewed as an object of international contention not because of any intrinsic value, but

because of its extrinsic value to the superpowers, to their alliance blocs, and to strategically related conflicts (i.e. the Vietnam War). And, the Laotian case study demonstrates that within bipolarity, ideology was a clear and effective form of affiliation with an external power, in many ways to the detriment of internal factions whose ability to maneuver for support was far more limited than during multipolarity.

Because of the limited freedom of maneuver enjoyed by ideologically-affiliated internal factions, the external powers were more able to practice informal imperialism – for example, the substantial role of USAID in the governance of Laos – rather than establishing a formal colonial relationship to reduce uncertainty about alignment. The politics of new states born into bipolarity were different from those born into multipolarity. Instead of a politics of exclusion – i.e. the Monroe Doctrine – bipolarity and ideology made for a politics of neutralization – penetrating and arranging the new state’s internal politics so as not to exacerbate the international political divide. But, Laotian factionalism was from the very beginning linked to choice of external sponsor for independence, a strategic and ideological link that carried through to the onset of the civil war. The polarization of Laotian politics very clearly increased over time, resulting in the weakening, division, and destruction of the neutralist position. The roots of Laotian factionalism and affiliation with external powers in their independence struggle lends support to the decision of this dissertation to examine extra-state wars alongside intra-state wars.

### *KOSOVO*

The case of the Kosovo War featured a limited intervention by the United States-led NATO alliance, which consisted of a 78-day bombing campaign and a prior commitment against introducing ground troops. The threat of a Russian counterintervention did play a role

in bilateral negotiations and domestic politics, but was never a serious or feasible option. There was a transnational ideological element that would have been significant during bipolarity, but in the context of unipolarity was unimportant. Enverist Stalinism, Titoism, orthodox communism, West European socialism, and Anglo-American liberalism identified different actors, but ideology ultimately had little or no effect on the formation of transnational links between internal factions and external powers. And, the former Yugoslavia was host to a number of mutually incompatible nation-building projects that resulted in a decade of civil war following the Cold War. Managing the newly created states required international legal, institutional, and practical political maneuvering.

The case of the Kosovo War gave strong support to the patterns predicted by theory. Unipolarity structured not only the interests of the external powers weighing intervention, but also the ability of internal factions to negotiate support. The United States, Europe, and Russia had few intrinsic interests in Kosovo. NATO intervention was driven by interests in the continuing viability of the NATO alliance, and in an international order that protected human rights. Unipolarity structured the character of the diplomatic and military intervention in Kosovo: the United States was politically disengaged, circumvented the institutions it was ostensibly defending, took on the lion's share of the military operations despite lacking planning or a military/political strategy, and conceded to Europe, Russia, and Milošević most of the negotiation for a conflict settlement and post-conflict reconstruction.

Within unipolarity, ideology is not an effective signaling strategy, either of foreign policy objectives or of factional alignment with external powers. Both Milošević and the KLA had communist ideological backgrounds, but neither employed these to gain external support.

Russia still had a significant communist party, but their interest in Yugoslavia was framed not in ideological terms but in ethno-religious terms. The liberalism of United States and Europe did not lead them to impose an ideological anti-communist interpretation on the Kosovo War, but liberalism did play a role in motivating their humanitarian intervention. However, humanitarian goals took a lower priority than alliance coherence in determining the means of intervention and the regime outcome negotiated. Finally, Kosovo demonstrates the effect of unipolarity in creating a proclivity toward informal imperialism as opposed to formal colonial relationships with the periphery, although neo-colonialism was feared as a potential outcome by Russia.

#### *ACROSS-CASE COMPARISON*

The three case studies were selected such that the independent variables would all be present and would be of moderate magnitude. By keeping the independent variables as constant as is possible with three cases spanning over 150 years, we could then make sure that we were isolating the effect of the study variable (polarity) on the differing outcomes. The purpose of this section is to make more explicit the crucial differences across cases that were addressed indirectly or implicitly in the case studies themselves.

#### **Onset**

Each case began with an important transnational element. The Uruguayan civil war and Laotian civil war featured one faction supported with troops and materiel from a neighboring state. Argentina backed its client Oribe by putting him in command of an army that had several times more Argentinian than Uruguayan troops. Likewise, the Pathēt Lao were organized, supplied, and backed by the Việt Minh, who supplied the vast bulk of the troops for the Pathēt Lao. The Kosovo War's onset does feature a transnational flow of arms across the

border from Albania into Kosovo, and while KLA fighters organized and trained across the border, the KLA itself was not backed by Albanians to the same extent as the other two cases.

The outlier of these three cases is the extent of prior external involvement in Laos. Whereas external powers intervened in Uruguay and Kosovo only after hostilities had started, in Laos the key external powers were intervening before the state was even independent, over a decade before the civil war would begin. This illustrates the unique structural proclivities created by bipolarity, in which the superpowers not only intervened more frequently, but were also heavily incentivized to sponsor the onset of rebellions.

#### **Periphery relationship & intervention types**

The differences resulting from the conditional variable are perhaps clearest when comparing great powers interests in the periphery and their manner of intervening. During multipolarity, the great powers sought to impose stability upon the peripheries such that they could focus on the complexities of managing the balance of power. Both Britain and France faced uncertain environments in Europe and the Americas: their economic interests in La Plata were threatened; France had just been isolated in Europe when Britain sided with the Holy Alliance powers during the Oriental Crisis of 1840; Britain and France had interests in maintaining an independent Texas, Mexico, and New Mexico to frustrate U.S. Manifest Destiny; Britain also faced potential conflict with the United States in Oregon and California; and, the Concert of Europe lay in tatters following the Revolutions of 1848. The civil war in Uruguay was a project that the British and French foreign ministers believed the two countries could cooperate on in order to renew their *entente*, a relationship they both needed in order to navigate the turmoil among the great powers. They intervened multilaterally on the side of the Uruguayan state, decisively at sea but half-heartedly on land.

Intervention in Uruguay was pursued with gunboat diplomacy, while the principal means of intervention in both Laos and Kosovo was air power. Ground troops appeared sparingly in the three cases, which made it easier for the external powers to limit the scope and commitment of their interventions. The Uruguay and Kosovo cases share some similarities: both were multilateral, both had a veneer of economic justification, both foreswore introducing ground troops, and both featured interventions undertaken with the explicit understanding that a central aim was to fortify an alliance (the *entente* and NATO). But the differences reveal the effects of the two different distributions of power. In Uruguay, both great powers deployed comparable forces to La Plata to impose stability, and both had a relatively equal degree of interest in the outcome of the civil war. In Kosovo, the United States was far and away the militarily dominant force, to the point that European multilateralism was less about contributing to or complementing the war effort and more about checking the United States' prosecution of the war. Conversely, it was Europe that had the strongest interests in the former Yugoslavia, whereas the United States exhibited disengagement throughout the run-up, negotiations, war planning, and settlement. The different distributions of power resulted in very different great power orientations toward the periphery, and consequently very different modes of intervention.

The Laotian civil war is clearly different than the other two cases. In Uruguay and Kosovo, the great powers created negligible joint plans and no negotiated agreements between each other. In Laos, both superpowers made clear and explicit international agreements about the fate of Laos, but nevertheless destabilized and intervened in the otherwise unimportant, poor, landlocked buffer state. Both superpowers were at pains to manage their respective blocs,

and Laos became an object in that struggle—symbolic of the U.S. credibility in providing security for its SEATO and other allies, and symbolic of the USSR’s ability to continue to lead a global revolutionary movement. Unable to demonstrate their resolve directly against one another, both superpowers exported their conflict into the peripheries by proxy. Had the Laotian conflict occurred during multipolarity, it would have been more likely that some combination of France, China, Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union would have intervened to put the rebellion down. But unlike the British and French understanding illustrated in Uruguay that managing great power tensions would require cooperation in stabilizing the periphery, the United States and Soviet Union were inclined by the structure of international politics to intervene against one another despite explicitly agreeing that they had no interests in Laos worth the threat of escalation.

### **Freedom of maneuver**

In each case, internal factions appealed for external assistance, and attempted to politically maneuver in order to gain advantage with great powers against their factional opponents. Rosas in Argentina, Suvanna in Laos, and Milošević in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia attempted to improve their positions by obtaining external support and splitting hostile alliances. But the number of great powers had a clear effect on their respective fortunes. Of the three, Rosas was the most successful in driving a wedge between Britain and France and appealing to the United States. While Rosas was ultimately unsuccessful in spurring a U.S. intervention, and was defeated by a regional coalition in 1851, he did outlast both the British and the French interventions against him and his client Oribe (both interventions were ended by peace treaty, in 1849 and 1850 respectively). It was not just Rosas’s shrewd diplomatic skills

that mattered, but also the prior condition that multiple external powers capable of intervening could be played off of one another.

As the head of the neutralist faction in Laos, Suvanna had a much more difficult time in appealing for and maintaining support. At first, the neutralist decision to come to terms with the French split the Lao Issara independence movement. Subsequently, the corruption introduced by the U.S. aid program, the intransigence of the rightwing generals trained and supported by the U.S., and the fact that his brother Suphānuvong led the Pathēt Lao, inclined Suvanna toward the left. Suvanna and Kōnglāe received support via Soviet airlift when under threat from the rightwing general Phūmī. But when Soviet aid was cut to the neutralists and instead channeled to the Pathēt Lao through the Việt Minh, Suvanna began to appeal to the United States for assistance. Each time Suvanna tilted in one direction or another in order to maintain the position of the neutralists, his faction splintered and weakened further—although he had two choices of alignment and maneuvered between both of them, realignment was far more polarizing during bipolarity.

Milošević, like Rosas, attempted to split the external powers intervening against him and simultaneously spur an ally to intervene on his side. Unlike Rosas, the drastic military imbalance that defines unipolarity precluded his scheme from achieving the same level of results. Milošević appealed to sympathetic or anxious European NATO members – Italy, Greece, Hungary, Germany, and perhaps France – in an attempt to split NATO consensus on the bombing campaign, hoping to draw it to an early close. While there was internal NATO disagreement on whether to widen the bombing campaign from Kosovo to include Serbia, and both Germany and Italy proposed bombing pauses, Milošević was unable to effect or take



advantage of any splits. Milošević also attempted to lure Russia into a counterintervention, on the premise of Slavic solidarity and Russian Communist Party sympathy. But again, Yeltsin and Russian generals were all too aware of the drastic military imbalance that they would face in a post-Cold War intervention. Only one external power had decisive power projection capabilities, and all the other involved actors were acutely aware of this imbalance even if they resented it, and thus Milošević had no viable options for military support or diplomatic maneuver within unipolarity. Were Milošević or Suvanna operating in multipolarity, their ability to garner support from different powers might have significantly altered the outcomes of their civil wars. Further, if Milošević faced upheaval in Kosovo during bipolarity, he would have been far more likely to be able to deter an intervention against him by aligning with the opposed superpower (even if that superpower were otherwise threatening to Yugoslavia).

#### **Duration, termination, and type**

Both Uruguay and Laos were significantly longer wars than average, while Kosovo was very short. The theory has no systematic expectations for conflict duration during unipolarity, but Laos did support the theory's expectation that long civil wars are more common during bipolarity. Uruguay did not conform to the theory's general expectation that wars during multipolarity will be shorter (although as noted in previous chapters, this expectation is probabilistic, and although there are several examples of very long wars during the multipolar period, they are just comparatively much rarer than in other periods).

In both Uruguay and Laos, the intervening powers were unwilling to end the civil conflict by starting a (ground) war in the neighboring country sponsoring the rebel faction – Argentina in the case of Uruguay, and North Vietnam in the case of Laos. The United States was dealing with a counterintervention, and had to weigh the prospects of escalation were they

to expand the war, while Britain and France on the other had simply did not have strong enough interests in Uruguay to justify going to war with Argentina. Britain, France, and the United States prolonged the internal wars in Uruguay and Laos by supporting the defense of Montevideo and the Royal Lao Government, but both conflicts ended with a quick military termination once the interventions were ended. Uruguay was victorious when disaffected Argentine governors defeated the siege of Montevideo, and then formed an alliance with Brazil and Uruguay to overthrow Rosas. Once U.S. support was withdrawn, the Royal Lao Government had no ability to defend itself against the Pathēt Lao, which was still receiving Việt Minh aid. When the ceasefire was broken, the Pathēt Lao made short work of the final conquest of Laos.

The U.S. intervention in Kosovo was longer than any country in NATO expected it to be, but it was still very short compared to the average civil war during unipolarity. Unlike the other two cases, Kosovo was terminated via negotiation rather than outright military victory, and the goal of the intervention was precisely to bring Milošević back to the negotiating table after he walked away from an agreement at Rambouillet. Laos was the subject of many attempts at negotiating or institutionalizing a stable peace: the 1949 General Convention with France, the 1954 and 1962 Geneva Conference agreements, the International Commission for Supervision and Control, and the 1973 Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation. Yet none of these negotiated agreements could hold more than a year, because of the inability of ideologically-charged partisans backstopped by rival superpowers to negotiate with each other in good faith or to abstain from preemptive cheating. In contrast, during unipolarity negotiated settlements could be sustained with a greater degree of success, and

international institutions were a central part in making the post-war peace a success.

Negotiation and institutionalization were able to finally function in a way that they could not during the Cold War, because there was no longer a rival peer power incentivized to spoil any peace that appeared advantageous to the other side.

### **Ideology**

There was an ideological element to all three cases, but ideology played a different role in each. As expected, ideology played a less important role in Uruguay than in Laos, and played almost no role in Kosovo. Great powers often sponsor ideologies, making their favored ideologies politically viable in ways that unsponsored ideologies cannot be.<sup>4</sup> As such, the number of great powers is important in determining what role ideology plays in linking international politics to internal factions.

In both the Uruguay and Kosovo cases, the great powers held liberal identities and liberalism acted as a justification for intervention. But the number of great powers distinguishes the role of ideology in the two cases. In Uruguay, liberalism stitched together factions in the region: the Colorados, the Unitarians, and the Ragamuffins for example. In Kosovo, liberalism defined neither Milošević's forces nor the KLA. In Uruguay, there were three liberal/republican great powers capable of intervening – Britain, France, and the United States – along with two conservative regional powers – Argentina and Brazil. But the liberal/republican identities of each great power were different, and so their motivations and objectives were different, allowing Rosas space to attempt to split them. France was commercially motivated, but also desired to preserve and defend Uruguayan liberalism. Britain prioritized their commercial liberalism over the survival of Uruguayan liberalism. And, the

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<sup>4</sup> On unarmed prophets, see Machiavelli (2003), Chapter VI.

United States morally supported republican anti-colonialism, but was unwilling to enforce it. Meanwhile, conservative Brazil was willing to join an alliance with the liberal Colorados and Unitarians to overthrow conservative Rosas, despite the Colorados having aided the liberal Ragamuffin rebellion in southern Brazil. In Kosovo, ideology was not an effective signal of affiliation, nor did it play a major role in determining the character of the intervention. There were no liberal factions fighting in Kosovo that could have appealed to liberal great powers more directly. The Russian Communist Party advocated for Milošević, but had little effect on the actual course taken by Yeltsin's administration. And, the means employed by NATO when intervening appeared to prioritize alliance solidarity over humanitarianism. If the Kosovo conflict were to have occurred during multipolarity or bipolarity, the role of Enverism, orthodox communism, West European socialism, and Anglo-American liberalism would have been more pronounced in drawing the lines of conflict and affiliation.

In contrast to multipolarity and unipolarity where ideology was not a strong signal of affiliation, the Laos case study shows how effective ideological partisanship was at linking a faction to an external power. When superpower support was withdrawn from the Pathēt Lao or the rightwing generals, they had no feasible options for realignment in order to regain support. The neutralist faction was not tied to a superpower sponsor, but their ability to switch came at the price of fracturing and weakening their position. In a multipolar world, France, for example, might have been able to make the neutralist position viable, Hồ Chí Minh and the Pathēt Lao might not have aligned with the USSR over the PRC for as long as they did, and the rightwing generals might have found alternative sources of funding (e.g. Japan or Britain) when the U.S. cut its aid. In unipolarity, the means employed by a unipolar power in support of its

affiliates – whether the United States, Soviet Union, or China – could have been more decisive and could have been expanded to North Vietnam more readily, because the fear of counterintervention and escalation would not be so great. However, it is not clear that a disengaged unipolar power would have intervened in Laos to protect co-ideological partisans, unless there was a pressing extrinsic interest that could also motivate a superpower intervention.

### **Imperialism**

In all three cases, the threat or option of recolonization played an important role in the political contention of the internal war. The viability of formal imperialism vs. informal imperialism was affected by the number of great powers, the clarity of alignment, and the relationship of great powers toward the periphery, leading to different outcomes in all three cases. Both Uruguay and Laos featured multiple great powers in an inherently conflictual structure, multipolarity and bipolarity respectively. Because alignment was unclear and France (and others) desired to impose stability upon the peripheries, formal imperialism was serious possibility when considering an end to the Uruguayan civil war. In contrast, during bipolarity both superpowers were incentivized to destabilize the peripheries, and formalizing their relationship with Laotian clients was not necessary because of the clarity of alignment within bipolarity, especially when dealing with their co-ideological factions. Informal imperialism was more functional for superpowers in bipolarity and unipolarity, but the Laos and Kosovo cases demonstrate that it worked for different reasons. In Kosovo, unipolarity meant that the United States did not perceive high stakes in Kosovo's alignment and did not see a real threat from Russia re-expanding their sphere of influence to exclude the United States. While there was an international institutional order during bipolarity, it was far more functional during

unipolarity, and could take the lead on managing Kosovo in the absence of leadership from a disengaged superpower.

#### **New state regime**

Finally, all three cases featured a different regime for managing new states – exclusion, neutralization, and internationalization. Exclusion was the principle during the Uruguayan civil war, and Rosas explicitly called on the United States to aid Argentina in upholding it. The Monroe Doctrine was functional for the United States and Britain, because the ideology of a given new state – liberal or conservative – did not mean much for its international alignment, thus a regime of neutralization was simply not necessary. This was not the case during the Laotian civil war, where a neutral balance of Laos’ domestic ideologies, enforced through international pressure and monitoring, was seen as the necessary conditions for the country’s removal from contention. While neutralization worked in a limited few other cases, it failed in Laos, even though both sides understood what would happen if they sought advantage or failed to control their co-ideological partisans. Regimes of exclusion or internationalization would not have worked during bipolarity, because of the clarity of alignment that bipolarity and ideology allowed for. The Kosovo War demonstrates why neutralization was unnecessary in unipolarity, insofar as the importance of ideology to international politics had declined dramatically. Nor was exclusion necessary, because the sole remaining superpower did not face competition from a rival peer, and instead was incentivized to disengage and internationalize, ostensibly safe from being denied access to Kosovo. International institutions that were earlier dysfunctional or non-functional due to the bipolar conflict emerged as capable stewards of new and developing states once the system became unipolar.

## *SUMMARY*

In sum, the case studies were congruent with the theory's expectations across a wide range of variables and outcomes. The decision-making of the leaders involved in each case reflected their understanding of the constraints and opportunities created by the polarity of the system. Thus the qualitative analysis of the historical record indicates that the mechanisms hypothesized to be linking international politics and internal war are indeed present, and are likely to be driving the broader patterns in internal war that the quantitative analysis observed. The across-case comparison helped to isolate the effect of polarity by holding the other independent variables to relatively comparable intermediate values. It then became clear why the outcomes varied from one period to another, and why a different distribution of power could have led to significantly different outcomes in Uruguay, Laos, and Kosovo, all else equal.

What follows is a discussion of the limitations of this study, directions for further research, and the implications for both theory and policy. First, it will examine the limitations of the data and its analysis, and then identify what further data or research can improve upon what this dissertation has done. Second, it illustrates ways in which additional case studies could confirm or falsify the theory presented here, and then assesses the generalizability of this dissertation's case studies to other internal wars in their respective periods. Third, it looks at this study's theoretical limitations and implications, examining structural realism, the relevance of nuclear weapons, the 'like units' debate, and the English School. Fourth, it derives the policy implications of this study's findings: what it means for American intervention during the post-Cold War period; how civil wars impact non-proliferation, terrorism, insurgency, and failed states; and, what the future of civil war might look like if the unipolar moment comes to an end.

## **Data limitations**

The first set of limitations concerns the quality of the quantitative data analyzed and the validity and power of the statistical tools used. The Gleditsch dataset is an important revision to the Correlates of War data, and it has many strengths which made it particularly suitable for this study: data going back to 1816, expanded criteria for system membership in the 1800s, some compatibility with UCDP data, and more recent updates than the Correlates of War data. However, choosing the Gleditsch dataset involved tradeoffs as well. As discussed in the Introduction and Quantitative chapters, most civil war datasets are limited in significant ways that create lacunae in studies of internal war.

The quality of data available before World War II is less detailed and less complete than data for post-WWII conflicts. This disparity limited the aspects of internal war that this dissertation could study. For variables such as battle deaths, the pre-WWII data is incomplete in places and estimates of the total deaths are less accurate. As historical research continues and the criteria defining states and system membership change, the universe of cases included in internal war datasets will likely expand further. More comprehensive and accurate data, especially for the Third World and the 1800s, will render present conclusions provisional. The types of datasets available are also more restricted if one requires data from the 1800s. Gleditsch and COW datasets display each conflict as a single observation, whereas post-WWII datasets offer conflict-year, dyad-year, country-year, or location-based conflict data, allowing more precise examination of the course of conflicts. Another potential limitation comes simply from using internal war datasets rather than datasets of all major political violence. Several



scholars argue that treating wars as categorically different and studying each type in isolation from the others is misleading and unnecessary.<sup>5</sup>

One of the broader problems faced when basing a study of internal war (especially a study of onsets) on datasets of internal war is the problem of selecting on the dependent variable and the elision of silent evidence. The thousand battle-death threshold used by COW and Gleditsch is an admittedly arbitrary cutoff, and in its arbitrariness it may obfuscate as much as it illuminates about the prevalence of internal conflict. Dogs that didn't bark may be as important as those that did. For example, some datasets of civil conflict code a conflict as ongoing if it meets the very low threshold of 25 deaths per year.<sup>6</sup> Others, including Sandra Halperin's dataset, include upheavals from small to large, each categorized by their relative magnitude.<sup>7</sup> This dissertation could have placed civil wars within the context of lower-level civil conflicts. Further research could determine how and why existing civil conflict would erupt into a full-scale war, whether and how low-level conflict continues after a war's termination, if civil war recidivism is characterized by ongoing civil conflict in between termination and resumption, and why certain politically significant low-level conflicts continue for years without escalating to the point that they appear in civil war datasets (e.g. the Troubles in Northern Ireland). It is certainly possible that low-level conflicts, instead of reinforcing this study's findings, could confound them—they could demonstrate that the level of onsets and

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Cunningham & Lemke (2009) and Florea (2012). Inter-state, intra-state, extra-state, and non-state wars are all treated as categorically different types of conflict, even if datasets code wars as switching from one category to the next over the course of the conflict. However, this study does look at intra-state and extra-state wars, arguing that the broad patterns of internal war need to be placed in the context of their continuity with the patterns of colonial war. In this way, it does go some length in breaking down the categorical divisions between inter-, intra-, extra-, and non-state wars. But integrating inter-state and non-state wars into this dissertation's theory would have impractically broadened the scope of the study.

<sup>6</sup> For example, see the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset: <https://www.prio.org/Data/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>.

<sup>7</sup> Halperin (2004).

incidence is relatively stable across all periods, and that the propensity for escalation to violence at a different order of magnitude is explained by simple chance.

A further limitation lies in this study's use of inferential statistics to analyze the datasets. The use of nonparametric tests might have limited this dissertation's ability to report significant differences across periods. Nonparametric tests are weaker than parametric tests, and therefore are more likely to produce Type II errors (e.g. failing to reject the null hypothesis, when in fact the difference is significant). Most comparativists employ parametric tests to examine their data, which makes my civil war study atypical.

There are three main implications that can be drawn from my study's analysis of the quantitative data. First, like Kalyvas & Balcells's work, my dissertation stresses the importance of international structural change to the study of internal war. As they conclude, there is a "need to connect the complex conflict processes taking place at the subnational, national, transnational, and international-systemic level. Students of internal conflict can profitably recognize that just because they are domestic conflicts, civil wars are no less immune to the effects of the international system than interstate wars."<sup>8</sup> Second and related, comparativists and international relations theorists would profit from greater interdisciplinary engagement. International relations theory and systemic explanations can speak to the research programmes of comparativists, just as comparativists' research is often crucial for international relations scholars. And third, if comparativists are persuaded that major shifts in the balance of power are a necessary element for the study of internal war, many variables beyond the ones tested here (many of which were listed in Chapter 1) can be tested again for their interaction with polarity.

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<sup>8</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), p. 428.

## Case studies and generalizability

A second limitation of this study lies in the number of case studies undertaken and the restricted range and combinations of the independent variables. Over a 200-year timespan, only three cases were examined out of a population of nearly 320 internal wars listed in the Gleditsch dataset (as well as an additional 130 colonial wars). There are a number of factors that could render the three cases unrepresentative of their respective periods, even though each case study included an endorsement and discussion of its representativeness.

As discussed in the Introduction, the case studies were selected to 1) involve all three independent variables (interests/intervention, ideology, and sovereignty), and 2) exhibit intermediate values on the independent variables such that the effect of the conditional variable (polarity) could be isolated. If there were more case studies undertaken, some cases could examine whether the absence of certain independent variables resulted in different outcomes.

Further research could test cases that lacked great power interests, lacked factional appeals to great powers, or lacked any prospect of intervention—e.g. the Zaili-Jinden Revolt of 1891 in China, or the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Or cases could be selected for an atypical presence or absence of transnational political ideology. Such cases could include: the Bosnian Revolt of 1836–1837, located in Europe but fought over local issues of governance, rather than issues of liberalism that more commonly motivated civil conflicts in Europe at that time; the Alwazari Coup of 1948 in Yemen, a non-ideological conflict during a period otherwise rife with ideological civil wars; or, the Nepal Maoist Insurgency spanning 2001–2006, which might have attracted significant attention during the Cold War, but commanded almost none during the War on Terror. Finally, research could focus on established state civil wars rather than the post-independence conflicts examined in this dissertation. Cases could include Russia's 1905

Bloody Sunday, the 1936–1939 Spanish Civil War, the 1944 Greek Civil War, the 1975–1990 Lebanese Civil War, or the 1992–1999 Algerian Islamic Front War.

With more cases, a broader range of across-case comparisons could be made. Not just the absence or presence of one or two of the independent variables, but also higher and lower values for the independent variables. In order to isolate the effect of the conditional variable (polarity), the independent variables were held at intermediate values across cases. But it is possible that if they were present in the extreme or entirely absent that the findings would be different. Cases of world-historical significance – avoided in this study, but typical of studies of revolution – would capture extreme values for independent variables. Such cases could include the 1821 Spanish Royalists, the 1920 Russian Civil War, the 1936 Spanish Civil War, the 1944 Greek Civil War, the 1978 Afghan Civil War, or the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

Cases from different regions could also be selected to test whether civil wars in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, and East Asia were driven by unique regional dynamics. For example, internal wars in China often appear as outliers in terms of onsets, duration, and/or battle deaths: the 1850–1866 Taiping Movement, the 1854–1872 Han-Miao War, the 1856–1872 Han-Pathay War, the 1860–1868 Nien Revolt, the 1862–1873 Tungan Rebellion, the 1930–1950 Chinese Civil War (fought in two phases), and the 1966–1976 Cultural Revolution, among many others.

Finally, the multipolar period is much longer than the bipolar and unipolar periods, making the use of just one case study to represent the entire period difficult to sustain. Moreover, the explicit understandings of the great powers regarding instability in the peripheries changed over the 128 years of multipolarity following the Napoleonic Wars. Further research could investigate internal wars as the institution of sovereignty was

reconstituted over time. The behavior of internal factions and great powers might change within different constructions of sovereignty, because the regulation of intervention and non-intervention is central to the sovereign states-system.<sup>9</sup>

## Theory limitations

The third limitation of this study lies in its choice of theoretical framework. Structural realism is a theory of international politics made powerful by its parsimony, and its ability to explain phenomena of core importance to international politics: why war and counterhegemonic balances recur throughout modern international history; and, the crucial ways in which a world of two superpowers was different than a world of several great powers. But, as discussed in the Introduction and Theory chapters, structural realism has its weaknesses, which other scholars have laid out in detail.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Vincent (1974). The Concert of Europe had a very clear understanding regarding the threat that civil upheaval posed to the security of the great powers. But while it functioned smoothly for the first several years of its existence, the Concert system broke down over the course of 1821–1856. In 1820 a liberal revolution in Spain marked the beginning of the Trienio Liberal. The deposed Spanish royalists fought to retake the state for King Ferdinand over the course of 1821–1823. The King appealed to the Holy Alliance – Austria, Russia, and Prussia, supporters of dynastic legitimism against liberalism and republicanism – but it was Bourbon France that would intervene in Spain to restore the monarchy with the backing of the Holy Alliance. Following this conflict, the ideological divide between the great powers widened substantially, rendering their ability to collectively resolve conflicts through the Concert mechanism hamstrung. On the other end of this period, the 1853–1856 Crimean War was the first significant military confrontation between the great powers that made up the Concert of Europe—the ability of the Concert to head off great power conflict had finally failed. Further, the Holy Alliance itself disintegrated when Russia saw conservative Austria siding with liberal/republican Britain and France.

Following this was a period of nationalism and “New Imperialism,” governed less by the Concert norms and more by *realpolitik* and willingness to employ the threat of upheaval to gain advantage over rivals. The Concert did have one nominal reappearance in the 1884–1885 Conference of Berlin, in which the great powers and minor European states negotiated the division of Africa between them.

And following WWI, the League of Nations became the next international regime, although it was less complete and even more hobbled than the Concert. The League had a very different approach to instability and intervention, insofar as it claimed self-determination as core goal of international order. Weber (1995), Chapter 5 critically evaluates the tension between the Wilson administration’s principle of self-determination and the U.S. interventions into both the Mexican and Russian revolutions.

<sup>10</sup> See for example: Keohane (1986), Buzan, Jones & Little (1993), Wendt (1999), Deudney (2007), and Deudney (2009), among many others.

As a structural theory, neorealism does not make concrete predictions, only probabilistic predictions about state behavior and recurring outcomes.<sup>11</sup> The theory advanced by this dissertation inherits some of structural realism's weakness regarding predictive power. But unlike Waltz's theory, this dissertation puts forward a substantial number of specific hypotheses about the character of civil wars in one period compared to another. The hypotheses are as much about expectations for specific civil wars as they are for the overall character of civil wars in each period of the balance of power. In each period there are examples of civil wars that meet few or none of the expectations, but because the predictions are probabilistic these civil wars do not necessarily falsify the theory.

Another weakness of structural realism commonly cited is its parsimonious set of assumptions about what constitutes the international system. Waltz does not differentiate between different types of states, different regime types, or different political units entirely. He defines the international order as anarchic, while rejecting considerations of imperial "islands" of hierarchy, and not considering arrangements of sovereign authority that do not fall along the anarchy–hierarchy continuum (e.g. negarchy). Finally, Waltz's distribution of capabilities is essentially material power, without including changes to the composition of power, or including non-material factors (e.g. identities, cultures, and ideologies).

This dissertation is built atop the same three basic assumptions as Waltz's structural realism. But the theory and approach advanced by this study do not suffer limitations from the

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<sup>11</sup> George & Bennett (2005), p. 202. As Waltz conceives it, structure acts as a selector or constraint. Structure does not prevent a state from acting in ways that it ought not to, were its leaders to understand the structure they operated within. Instead states with deviant behavior are selected against by suffering serious blows to their vital interests, the ultimate possibility being state death. Fazal (2007). States may eventually abandon deviant behavior or learn better strategies through competition and socialization. But in some cases, states that go against the dictates of realism may suffer no deleterious consequences, indeed they may prosper.

starting assumptions to the same degree that conventional structural realism does. Here, the state remains the most significant actor, but the unitary actor image of the state is immediately dispensed with by virtue of studying civil wars and their internal factions. Moreover, this dissertation differentiates between formal and informal imperial states, implying that some forms of unit-type variation may be significant (see below), and that sovereignty, as an institution constituting the international realm, is more complicated than an ideal-type choice between anarchy and hierarchy. This argument still relies heavily on the material distribution of capabilities and polarity, doing little to address the changing composition of power except in its brief discussion of nuclear weapons. It does include an examination of transnational political ideologies, but the causal arrow only runs one direction, from power to ideology.

Further research on the relationship between the international system and internal was could be undertaken from different theoretical approaches. Liberal international relations theory would be more at home discussing non-unitary conceptions of states, international peacekeeping and governance institutions, a variety of regime types, and international economic causes. Constructivists will have far more purchase on factors such as the construction and exportation of sovereignty, changing norms of intervention, the potentially structural effect of political ideologies, and the role of identity (ethno-religious, civic, or otherwise) in the roots of civil conflict. The English School's ecumenical approach to international relations theory could better integrate the realist, liberal, and constructivist approaches, examining their mutually constituting areas of interaction and overlap, while also adding the insights drawn from its own unique conception of the primary social institutions of international politics.<sup>12</sup> World-System

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<sup>12</sup> Buzan (2004), Chapter 6.

Theory already places the economic, ideological, and power aspects of core–periphery relations at the center of its theoretical approach.

There are three key implications for structural realism that flow from this dissertation. First, it extends the relevance of structural realism, which has been criticized for only focusing on the great powers, and then only focusing on security interests. This dissertation broadens the scope of structural realism to demonstrate its relevance not just to relations between the great powers, but also to relations with the peripheries, and how the broad strokes of the most common form of political violence – internal war – are shaped by the changing structure of the international system. It further broadens structural realism by treating structure *as structure*, not as the content of international politics. The constraints of structure on security interests are common fare for contemporary realism, but addressing the structuring effect of the balance of power on ideology and sovereignty is much rarer.

Second, this dissertation makes a strong case that realism should not continue to avoid addressing civil war and decolonization as constitutive components of international relations. Civil war was more important to the emergence of the early modern states-system than was international war.<sup>13</sup> Anarchy, as one of the three foundational assumption of structural realism, is an order produced by the institution of sovereignty, and it is precisely that institution that is at stake in civil wars (and colonial wars). Acknowledging the centrality of civil war to realism will allow for a more comprehensive engagement with the tradition of thinkers claimed by realism – Thucydides, Machiavelli, Bodin, and Hobbes – each of whom had domestic order as their primary concern, and only secondarily drew conclusions about international politics.

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<sup>13</sup> Nexon (2009).



Decolonization is likewise a process that entails another foundational assumption of structural realism: that the principal actor that constitutes international politics is the state. Is the assumption that a system of 40 states is similar to a system of 200 justifiable? Does having colonial great powers produce a different international security politics than polar powers that preside over a massive redistribution of global territory and the expansion of system membership? Realism ought to be able to speak to more topics outside of intra-core relations.

Below I discuss further theoretical research in three areas that could extend or complicate this dissertation's work: the role of nuclear weapons and their perilous relationship with internal conflict; opening up the second image to include systemic change between functionally different types of states; and, where this project might speak to the English School project and Martin Wight's three traditions.

## **Nuclear weapons**

The advent of nuclear weapons marked a sea change in relations between great powers, and even between nuclear states that would otherwise be regional powers. War used to be a constitutive institution of international society,<sup>14</sup> and while the threat of war remains, its meaning has changed: just as Metternich designed the Concert on the recognition that great power war was linked to revolutionary upheaval, war in the nuclear era likewise had to be extremely limited or avoided entirely to prevent escalation to a nuclear exchange. The stalemate among nuclear states may reinforce their drive to pursue war by other means—

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the English School's 'primary institutions' of international society, including war, see Buzan (2004), Chapter 6.

subversion of their rival and the rival's allies via transnational political ideological penetration, economic/financial maneuvering, and sponsoring upheaval.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from its condition as an object in the struggles between great powers, the periphery itself has not been markedly changed by the advent of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear states in the periphery have been willing to fight nuclear powers (e.g. North Korea and China against the United States during the Korean War, and Vietnam against the United States and subsequently China) and even initiate wars against them (e.g. the Arab states against Israel in 1973). But the study of nuclear weapons and revolution may render more insights if we look at the civil war as the driver rather than the object of nuclear politics.

First, nuclear weapons play an outsized role in the international reaction to state collapse or dramatic regime change. Nuclear weapons – both before and after – were implicated in the international politics of regime change in both South Africa and the Soviet Union. The potential for state collapse or dramatic regime change in existing nuclear states, China and Pakistan, will dominate the policies of external powers toward those states if they experience significant upheaval.<sup>16</sup> For example, as the Cold War came to an end and the Soviet Union was challenged from below by its constituent republics, Bush Sr. attempted to aid Gorbachev in holding the center.<sup>17</sup> Despite Pakistan being a questionable ally to the United States as best, the Bush Jr. administration attempted to keep Pakistan from falling apart. And if China's epidemic of protests one day spiral out of control,<sup>18</sup> it is more likely that the United States will seek to aid in restoring stability within its challenger than to support centrifugal or

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<sup>15</sup> Herz (1957).

<sup>16</sup> David (2008).

<sup>17</sup> Bush & Scowcroft (1998), p. 541.

<sup>18</sup> CSIS & IIE (2005), Chapter 3.

hypernationalist rebels. Just as the Concert of Europe attempted to restore France as a great power following its revolutionary upheaval, the nuclear states of today may form an inchoate nuclear concert, even without the explicit understandings regarding order and survival that Metternich's Concert had.<sup>19</sup>

Second, the role of peripheral instability in exacerbating nuclear instability requires greater study. There are existing datasets of militarized interstate disputes (MIDs), many of which involve tensions between two countries over instability in a third.<sup>20</sup> But there are no datasets of nuclear MIDs – occasions on which one or more nuclear states overtly or privately threatened the use of nuclear weapons or put nuclear delivery systems on alert because of a crisis. It would be instructive to know when a third country undergoing attack from within or without has been significant enough to one or more nuclear states that the threat of the use of nuclear force has been risked. We tend to think of nuclear weapons as forcing the superpowers to export instability to the peripheries, but in fact the reverse may also be true, if peripheral conflict and escalation redounds instability back to the core nuclear confrontation.

## Unit type

Empire and nation-state play an important role in the story about internal war (and its continuity with colonial war) told by this dissertation. The transition from empire to nation-state results in an accounting problem for political scientists studying intra-state war, because 'extra-state' wars are also contained within one political unit—the empire—but are fought between differentiable parts: metropole and periphery. The transition from empire to nation-

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<sup>19</sup> On nuclear concerts, see Deudney (2007).

<sup>20</sup> See the Correlates of War MID 4.1 dataset: Palmer, D'Orazio, Kenwick, & Lane (2015), "The MID4 Data Set: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. Forthcoming.; and also see, Zeev Maoz (2005), Dyadic MID Dataset (version 2.0): <http://psfaculty.ucdavis.edu/zmaoz/dyadmid.html>.

state does not appear in Waltz's theory; because of the logic anarchy and self-help, unit-type remains homogenous. Scholars have contested Waltz's insistence of functionally like units, but this debate has not produced substantial results in terms of problem-solving theory.<sup>21</sup>

But a case can be made for a *functional* difference between empire and the nation-state, which could be seen as a systemic change rather than a system change.<sup>22</sup> The state as an institutional apparatus describes both the European colonial empires and the modern nation-state. In their respective historical periods, the European colonial empires and the nation-state were the great powers that defined the system, and Waltz's mechanisms of socialization and competition were clearly at work in the colonial period and the post-WWII period to produce homogeneity of unit types.<sup>23</sup> Most importantly, empires and nation-states have different functions in the international system. Empires face different tasks because of the constitutive aim of empire: expansion. As such, empires attempt to monopolize violence not just internally but externally as well by dividing sovereignty and providing of authoritative government external to the nation.<sup>24</sup> A system of empires has a different logic than a system of nation-states,

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<sup>21</sup> See Waltz's position on functionally-like units in: Waltz (2001), Waltz (1979), Waltz (1986). For a cross-section of the debate on functional differentiation (and other forms of differentiation that have been put forward as relevant), see: Ruggie (1986), Buzan, Jones, and Little (1993), Spruyt (1994), Schroeder (1994), Wendt & Friedheim (1995), Buzan & Little (1996), Kaufman (1997), Ruggie (1998), Sørensen (1998), Buzan & Little (2000), Lake (2003), Donnelly (2009), and Buzan & Albert (2010). On structural differentiation, see for example Buzan & Little (2000), pp. 87, 376. Jackson (2007), p. 12. Arendt (1968), pp. xxi, 125–127, 131, 136–138, 153–154, 223–237, 243, 250.

<sup>22</sup> On the difference between *system* change and *systemic* change, see Gilpin (1981), pp. 39–43.

<sup>23</sup> The systemic change in unit-type was made possible by the utter destruction of all colonial powers in WWII and the reconcentration of power into anti-colonial states. The structure of international politics is defined in terms of its major actors. Waltz (1979), p. 94. See also the discussion of structural change and decolonization above in Chapter 2, footnote 80.

<sup>24</sup> Keene (2002). See also Wimmer & Min (2006), pp. 867, 870–871, 873. Janice Thomson's work reformulates this as a question of functional sovereignty. From roughly 1800 to 1900 AD, she notes the shift from the Weberian function of monopolizing violence *internally* within a territory toward a more expansive function of managing violence *externally*.<sup>24</sup> She traces the territorialization of external violence as the state asserted control outside of its borders, arguing that this was a functional transformation of sovereignty. Thomson (1994), Chapter 1, esp. pp. 16, 18–20. See also, Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," p. 33.

because territorial expansion is a third form of balancing behavior beyond internal mobilization and external alliance formation.

Finally, empire and the nation-state are functionally different with respect to the emergent international order that these units produce. Wohlforth *et al.* argue that the logic of anarchy differs when expansion of a system's scope is taken into account. This builds on Gilpin and Deudney's recognition that system scope is a system-level factor.<sup>25</sup> The European states-system functioned from 1400–1945 AD through a balance of power facilitated by extra-regional expansion, which increased the scope of the system.<sup>26</sup> It is no coincidence that European expansion began in the 1400s—Portuguese colonization in Africa, and the *repubbliche marinare* in the Northern Italian city-state system—at the same time that the sovereign state was emerging. Nor should it be a surprise that the treaties comprising the Peace of Westphalia reflected the thought of Dutch jurists, a result of the hegemonic influence of the largest colonial empire of the 1600s.<sup>27</sup> The process of external expansion and state-building in Europe were two sides of the same coin.<sup>28</sup>

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Carl Schmitt, Siba Grovogui, and Edward Keene all critique the traditional narrative of sovereignty arguing that outside of Europe the practice of sovereignty had a different function, and that limitation of violence and sovereign equality applied only to the European states. In all three, sovereignty is divided territorially and its function relative to violence outside of Europe is different. Schmitt (2003). Grovogui (2002). Keene (2002).

The controversial position on imperialism take by Robinson & Gallagher argued that the territorial expansion and formalization of empire was driven less by internal ideological or economic motivations, but rather by the desire to impose order on peripheral crises, instability, and weakness. Robinson & Gallagher (1953) and Robinson & Gallagher (1968); on the controversy, see WM. Roger Louis, ed. (1976). For a discussion of Robinson & Gallagher among theories of imperialism, see Doyle (1986).

<sup>25</sup> Gilpin (1981), pp. 38–39; Deudney (2007), pp. 37–41. Historically all regional subsystems had collapsed into empire or the predominance of an overwhelming hegemon. The effective functioning of the balance of power in Europe was a historical anomaly. In the majority of the cases they studied, system closure was a necessary condition for the failure of the balance of power and the collapse of the system under the dominance of one actor. Wohlforth *et al.* (2007), pp. 158, 178; Deudney (2007), pp. 137–138.

<sup>26</sup> Wallerstein (2011), p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Arrighi (1994), p. 43. McNeill (1982), p. 102; Abernethy (2000), p. 377.

<sup>28</sup> Abernethy (2000), pp. 49, 375–376.

Whereas structural realists ignore the possibility of functionally differentiated units comprising the international system, and critics of Waltz argue for the relevance of non-functional types of differentiation, there is a strong case to be made that the shift from empire to nation-state constitutes a *systemic* change compatible with Waltz's structural realism. This dissertation provides a warrant for further study on this topic, given the profound importance of this unit-type shift for political violence and its consequences for international politics.

## English School

By design, the three major factors examined in this study – the balance of power, the institution of sovereignty, and transnational political ideology – correspond to the three major approaches that the English School's Martin Wight juxtaposes in international relations theory: realism, rationalism, and revolutionism.<sup>29</sup> In this dissertation, all three are treated as independent, and the causal arrows only run in one direction: the balance of power constrains ideology and sovereignty. But an English School approach to this same topic could more fully explore the mutually constituting intersections of the realist, rationalist, and revolutionist aspects of the international system. Sovereignty is a constitutive institution of international politics, and not only does power shape sovereignty, but sovereignty plays a role in constructing the actors, in constructing what constitutes intervention, and in constructing the very

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<sup>29</sup> Martin Wight arranged international relations theory into a debate between three different approaches to the question of the nature of international politics and the sources of international order: the realists, rationalists, and revolutionists. The 'realists' claim a long line of thinkers focused on war, *ragion di stato*, anarchy, and the balance of power. They included political theorists like Machiavelli and Hobbes, statesmen such as Frederick the Great and Clemenceau, and modern political scientists Carr and Morgenthau. Among the 'rationalists' were natural law political theorists, jurists and scholars of international law, and liberal statesmen. The rationalist tradition is the principal contribution of the English School, its work centering on the primary institutions of international society and the sources of order within anarchy. The 'revolutionist' tradition is comprised of those theorists that rejected the states-system as the necessary focus of world politics. Central to revolutionary thought is the transcendence of the states-system, and the horizontal (rather than vertical) lines of solidarity inspired by these political ideologies. Wight (1991). Bull (2002). Buzan (2004), pp. 9–10, 33–36, 98.

phenomenon of a ‘civil war’ as something distinguishable from other forms of war by virtue of taking place “inside” of a political unit.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, transnational political ideologies played an important role in constituting international politics. The modern state system emerged when the feudal units of early modern Europe were rent by transnational political Protestantism (especially Calvinism).<sup>31</sup> Bodin and Hobbes theorized sovereignty not simply as centralized coercive power, but as a final epistemological authority that could settle transcendental truth claims.<sup>32</sup> Transnational political ideologies like liberalism, republicanism, and various forms of Marxism continued to play a role in the reconstruction of sovereignty by a hegemon following major wars: the conservative anti-republican Concert of Europe; the liberal League of Nations; and the liberal United Nations. The English School notion that sovereignty is a primary institution of international society would allow for a historicist exploration of changes to “intervention” and “internal” war over time.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> On the inside/outside construction, see Walker (1993).

<sup>31</sup> Nexon’s work demonstrates the effect of the Protestant transnational political theology in creating the crisis of European dynastic order. The hub-and-spoke structure of dynastic holdings in the early modern period depended on the bracketing of rebellion or upheaval, limiting it territorially and preventing its spread. But transnational religious movements overcame territorial and class divisions, intensifying routine political disagreements by injecting them with transcendental religious meaning. Upheavals in one area could spread and become coordinated, overcoming the strategies of divide-and-rule that characterize hierarchy. The political pressures generated by interperipheral linkages and upheaval forced great power intervention, internationalizing religious conflicts into “European civil war.” The states-system emerged out of successive attempts to domesticate religious conflict. Nexon (2009), pp. 3–4, 8, 34, 99, 101, 105–106, 108–109, 120, 123, 129, 132, 281–282.

<sup>32</sup> Sowerby (1998), pp. 151, 153, 165; Ahrens Dorf (2000), pp. 582–583, 586; Williams (2005), pp. 21, 23, 25, 27, 30–34; See *King James Bible*, Genesis 11:1–9; cited by Hobbes (1994), iv, 2. Lilla (2007), pp. 86, 110, 218. Ball (1985), pp. 749, 753–754, 759. Hobbes’s desired epistemological constraint on language is, according to Ball, akin to George Orwell’s Newspeak from 1984. See also: Schmitt (2007b), pp. 27–32, 34–38, 43, 46–47, 52, 54, 65.

<sup>33</sup> This approach would take seriously Ruggie’s critique of Waltz’s use of the ahistorical category of ‘anarchy’ instead of the historicizable concept of ‘sovereignty.’ Ruggie (1998), p. 133. This would also eschew the hegemonic institutional ‘lock-in’ approach taken by Gilpin, Keohane, and Ikenberry, in favor of a more continuous view of institutionalization and contestation. Kathleen Thelen argues that,

[I]t is not sufficient to view institutions as frozen residue of critical junctures, or even as “locked in” in the straightforward sense that path dependence arguments adopted from economics literature often suggest. In politics, institutional reproduction can be partly understood in terms of the increasing returns effects to which this literature has drawn our attention – but only partly... [I]t becomes clear that institutional survival often

## Policy implications

In addition to the above discussion of policy toward turmoil in nuclear states, there are another four important policy implications that follow from this dissertation. First, whether the United States is underproviding security in the post-Cold War period. Second, under what circumstances should the United States intervene into internal wars, and with what strategy. Third, what internal war's implications for non-proliferation are. And fourth, what should we expect if the system shifts from unipolarity back to bipolarity or multipolarity.

### *UNDERPROVISION OF SECURITY IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA?*

“Overstretch” is the most typical diagnosis of the United States’ position in the world as a fading hegemon following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This view is shared by the declinist commentariat, structural realists such as Waltz and Walt, libertarian and paleo-conservative politicians and think tanks, and by the wishful-thinking left. Present overstretch is said to be caused by some combination of imprudent leadership, the adventurism of an unchecked superpower, commitments exceeding resources, overspending and war debt, and the pathologies of “late” capitalism.

But a case may be made that during unipolarity the United States is underproviding security relative to great powers in prior periods in the balance of power. As a percentage of intra- and extra-state wars, unipolarity features the lowest average rate of interventions per conflict: 25% in unipolarity, 39% in bipolarity, and 50% in multipolarity. This is expected by the theory, as discussed in the unipolarity section of Chapter 2 and the intervention section in Chapter 3. This may simply be a case of resources that might otherwise have been used to

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involves active political renegotiation and heavy doses of institutional adaptation, in order to bring institutions inherited from the past into line with changes in the social and political context. Thelen (2004), p. 8.

The international institution of sovereignty is subject to continual political contestation from below in the form of internal war and the interventions it inspires.



intervene in internal wars being diverted for over a decade to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the pattern of U.S. disengagement from internal wars prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> (not just in the former Yugoslavia, but in cases such as Somalia and Rwanda), suggests that the War on Terror might not be the cause of U.S. underprovision of security. Relative inaction in the face of the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) insurgency and the Russian-sponsored Donbass secession further support this point, especially since the United States has withdrawn from both Afghanistan and Iraq. What we might be seeing is “understretch” rather than vice versa.<sup>34</sup>

If the United States is understretched, is the policy implication to spend more on defense and to intervene more frequently? No, not necessarily. While U.S. defense spending as a percentage of GDP is at its lowest level since the 1930s, increasing defense spending and engaging in adventurism – even in geostrategically significant conflicts like the current Ukrainian civil war – does not follow from this dissertation. The implication is instead that the United States *can* practice empire-on-the-cheap, and that its interests *are* to underprovide security (although this should not be confused with isolationism or retrenchment).

The moral hazard that arises is how to justify standing aside, dumping the obligation to intervene onto countries we know are less capable, especially if crimes against humanity are being committed, like in Rwanda, Kosovo, or ISIS-controlled territory. Accepting military noninvolvement in most internal wars means that the United States would likely try to develop its policies and capabilities for non-military intervention, mediation, and post-conflict reconstruction. But the thinness of such engagement is already apparent from previous crises in which humanitarian interventions unaccompanied by the presence or threat of force have

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<sup>34</sup> On understretch, see for example: Haass (1999), Nye (2003), and Ferguson (2004). Rebutting charges of overstretch, see for example: Cohen (2004), Levey & Brown (2005), Friedberg (2007), Joffe (2009), and Altman & Haass (2010).

either crossed the ‘Mogadishu line’ and become military interventions, or have simply abandoned the mission when the security situation deteriorates. Disengagement from conflicts will be more difficult to sustain as a conscious policy than as a pattern of *ad hoc* behavior.

### ***WHETHER TO INTERVENE AND WITH WHAT STRATEGY?***

If intervention is to occur, it will be important to be able to unlearn misleading lessons about civil wars drawn from the Cold War experience, and instead calibrate our expectations specifically to the post-Cold War conditions. If this dissertation is correct that the changing balance of power has created a sea change in the character of internal war and its relationship to international politics, then policy must be geared toward navigating the internal wars of unipolarity. First, because of the unclear valence of events and outcomes in the periphery, the usefulness of intervening is questionable, especially in the case of an internal war aiming at regime change (as opposed to secession). A country’s post-conflict orientation is less likely than in other periods to align with the intervener, especially given the incentive the United States has to hand off post-conflict management to international or regional institutions.

Second, interventions can be undertaken with less caution compared with Cold War interventions, because the threat of counterintervention and escalation is much reduced (although not erased, as the Ukrainian civil war demonstrates). The United States will still attempt to pursue arms-length, limited interventions, but that tendency can and should be overcome with a stricter adherence to the Powell Doctrine—overwhelming force can be used precisely because escalation threats are more remote. Third, internal war duration is no longer driven by counterintervention or an anti-revolutionary concert, rather duration results more from which side the United States intervenes to support and the magnitude of the support given. In general, limited interventions will result in longer wars, as will interventions in

support of rebels. Unlike the misleading conclusions drawn from conflating Cold War and post-Cold War data, longer duration wars are not any more likely to end in negotiated settlement—negotiation will likely work best if achieved quickly before moderates are completely eliminated. Fourth, the United States must realize that while the tail could wag the dog during the Cold War, the situation has reversed in the post-Cold War era of unipolarity. Because factional freedom of maneuver is limited in obtaining decisive support, and because the United States can afford to commit less to countries through informal imperialism, the United States can demand more of its clients than it once could. Putting conditions upon its assistance to factions will be more credible and more effective.

### *FAILED/WEAK STATES, TERRORISM & INSURGENCY*

As discussed in Chapters 1 & 2, failed states and the particular type of transnational terrorist networks we are witnessing may be pathologies unique to unipolarity. This structure leads to disengagement from internal wars, often leading to perpetual weakness, conflict recidivism, or state failure in the periphery—Collier calls this the ‘conflict trap.’<sup>35</sup> Whereas multipolarity and bipolarity feature external support for the state’s forces in an internal war, unipolarity often does not, meaning that failed states may be more common for systemic reasons.<sup>36</sup> Closely linked to weak and failed states, contemporary terrorism manifests itself more as a transnational insurgency than as a political movement utilizing discrete acts of

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<sup>35</sup> Collier (2007). Kalyvas & Balcells write,

[T]he end of the Cold War also hurt states. With the Soviet threat gone, the United States lost interest in propping up client states in the developing world and divested itself from many weak states, thus weakening them further... With superpower support reduced or gone, states had to rely primarily on their domestic capacity. This was a serious problem for several states whose domestic capacity was notoriously wanting and had required enormous efforts to prop up in the first place... [T]he abrupt interruption of superpower assistance to low-capacity states degraded their ability to deter even poorly organized rebels. Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), pp. 421–423.

<sup>36</sup> Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), p. 421. On the effect of the Cold War on Third World government institutionalization and capacity-building, see Huntington (1968).

violence. Several academics and military thinkers, starting as early as 2002 if not earlier, have characterized Al Qaeda as a transnational insurgency.<sup>37</sup>

Because there is no rival superpower that assistance can be obtained from, extremist Political Islam uses terrorism (as an asymmetric weapon of the weak) against U.S. “occupations” throughout the Middle East, against the U.S. client regimes and allies that allow U.S. military basing, and against regimes that will not enforce sharia law. Conflict with Al Qaeda may be better understood as an internationalized internal war (or even an extra-state war), internal to the Middle Eastern region or to the Islamic world more broadly, rather than internal to one political unit. Presently in Syria and Iraq, ISIS is operating even more clearly as an insurgency with state-building pretensions than as a loose terrorist network. U.S. disengagement may invite this type of insurgency: the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia was cited by Osama bin Laden as one of the reasons why Al Qaeda could and would be successful;<sup>38</sup> and, the Iraqi and Syrian insurgencies (culminating in ISIS/ISIL) surged following the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in December 2011.

The link between weak or failed states and transnational insurgency presents a difficult policy puzzle for the United States, a puzzle which has not found an adequate solution in the nearly fourteen years since the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. An anti-insurgent concert would have seen the United States making common cause with regimes such as Russia, China, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, among others, legitimizing repression in cases that were actually local conflicts (the Chechens and the Uyghurs, for example). Intervening or providing aid to prop

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<sup>37</sup> On how to classify extremist Political Islam, Al Qaeda specifically, and transnational insurgency more broadly, see: Jansen & Faraj (1986), Betts (2002), Scheuer (2004), Pape (2005), Pape (2005a), Morris (2005), Kilcullen (2005), Bunker (2005), Barno (2006), Newmann (2008), Owen (2010), Kalyvas & Balcells (2010), and Jervis (2011).

<sup>38</sup> Bin Laden (2005), pp. 54–55.

up failing states with objectionable regimes such that their repressive apparatuses could function would be just as problematic. Historically the most effective method at increasing state capacity has been interstate war, but allowing a Saudi-Iranian interstate conflict, for example, in the expectation that it would solve the problem of their proxy war destabilizing Syria and Iraq would be a politically unacceptable policy likely to backfire. There may not be an effective solution to the problem of violence emanating from weak or failing states as long as insurgents perceive correctly that the United States is less willing to intervene into internal conflicts in the post-Cold War era, and is unwilling to support objectionable regimes as a preventative matter of course simply to inhibit terrorism.

#### *FUTURE TRANSITION FROM UNIPOLARITY*

Finally, the last major policy implication lies in the future: what to expect if and when the unipolar moment finally comes to a close. One of the limitations of this study is that it only has one historical period to draw from for each polarity. If there were another instance of multipolarity, bipolarity, or unipolarity that could be studied in comparison, the structural effects of polarities could more convincingly be distinguished from those that are circumstantial and contingent. Nevertheless, deriving predictions for internal war in the future is a clarifying and important exercise.

Multipolarity could emerge if U.S. relative decline accelerates and China's growth decelerates as well. The resulting world could be one of many competitive powers: the United States, China, Russia, Japan, perhaps the EU, and perhaps India. Great power relations would return to a high level of complexity, but hopefully one moderated by nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons and the conflictual structure of bipolarity may have incentivized proxy warfare in the periphery, and it will be an important test of the theory if the great powers exhibit a stability

preference like they did in the 1800s, or if security competition in a nuclearized multipolar world will also lead to the export of instability to the peripheries. I expect that a new formal “imperialism” will grow out of the present tendencies toward economic regionalism, i.e. mutually exclusive ‘imperial preferences.’ This drive toward economic regionalism has been (and will continue to be) a reaction to instability, for example the increased importance of the renminbi following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, and the recent Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank proposal. Despite nuclear weapons, the structural effect of multipolarity ought to still be a stability preference toward the peripheries. Civil war onset will be less frequent and rarely sponsored, intervention will also be rare and anti-revolutionary, and while multipolarity will likely feature a return to competing ideologies, ideology will not reliably determine factional alignment with great powers or vice versa.

Bipolarity could return if China, the EU, or another rising power develops the economic and military capacity to rival the United States globally. The major question would be whether a different identity for the rival pole would substantially change how the core competes in the periphery. For about a decade, China has been experimenting with the neo-Confucian slogans of “Harmonious World” and “Harmonious Society,” attempting to provide the CCP a second wind of legitimacy. A superpower competition between liberal capitalism and a vaguely socialist neo-Confucianism is unlikely to look like the virulent ideological subversion that characterized the Cold War. Likewise, a democratic socialist European Union competing with liberal capitalist United States is unlikely to create an intensely violent ideological contest. Without the ideological element that existed during the Cold War, will core–periphery relations in a future bipolarity function the same way? Even without an intense

ideological contest, the possibility of being overtaken by a rising challenger ought to return the system to competition over the peripheries as objects of struggle between the superpowers. Even ideologically-like superpowers can compete bitterly over resources, status, economic security, influence, and the narcissism of small differences. The security and economic stakes perceived in peripheral alignment will incentivize the superpowers to opportunistically look for elements of instability that could open up a state's realignment. Strategically anticipating this behavior from each other will lead to counterinterventions with various means, increasing the duration of civil conflicts.

Unipolarity could continue, but with China or the EU stepping into the breach in the event of a rapid collapse in the United States. In structural realism, unipolarity more than any other distribution of power allows for the identity of the sole superpower to play a significant role in the character of the system.<sup>39</sup> Within unipolarity there is a greater possibility for second-image factors of state identity to play a determining role in the character of the system, insofar as the polar power perceives its interests to overlaps with those of the system. A system in which the hegemon is a sovereignty hawk like China could have very different implications for internal war when compared to a system in which the post-sovereign European Union becomes the sole superpower. Still, the margin of power between a new superpower and the rest of the system should have the same effect in producing disengagement from conflicts in which the stakes are necessarily low. Perhaps the new superpower's ideology will play a markedly different role in determining its interaction with the periphery—one can imagine the global revolutionary effects if the Soviet Union were to have emerged from World War II as the sole

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<sup>39</sup> See the section on unipolarity in Chapter 2, especially footnote 126.

superpower. However, such a crusading superpower's unipolar moment may come to a close much faster if its actions provoke much stronger balancing responses than the United States has experienced so far.

Whether or not future distributions of power will create the same structural relationships between the great powers and internal war depends on the degree to which the character of each historical period studied was more the result of the balance of power or more the result of the identities and ideas of the era. This dissertation has studied the three periods of the balance of power over the past two hundred years, and the identities of the great powers both changed within periods (e.g. the rise of Japan as a great power during multipolarity, and Russia transforming into the Soviet Union) and remained constant across periods (e.g. both the United States and Soviet Union transitioning from multipolarity to bipolarity). The historical evidence examined in this study suggests that the distribution of power had a greater effect on internal war than the changing identities of the great powers. The theory expects that this finding will hold true as the distribution of power continues to change.

## **Peroration**

This study has contributed to a wide number of research areas and debates in a topic that spans both comparative politics and international relations theory. First, it has demonstrated that shifts in polarity do have an important effect on the patterns and character of internal war. The history of the balance of power historicizes internal wars, periodizing the insights that can be drawn from the study of civil conflict, and highlighting which aspects were products of a fundamentally different political context.



Second, internal war onsets were lower in the 1800s, but this finding is mostly an artifact of the transformation of empires into nation-states. Onsets and interventions have been remarkably stable across the periods dividing the past two hundred years of internal war data. This finding is an important piece in debunking the “weak state” hypothesis, that the massive rise in internal war incidence during the Cold War was primarily due to conflict in new post-colonial states. In fact, wars in new states appear to be proportionately rarer than wars in established states, and this holds true across all periods.

Third, the skyrocketing incidence of internal war during bipolarity is due to the increased duration of conflicts during that time period. And again, it is the established states not the new states that were driving changes in duration across periods. Differences in duration from period to period are best explained by the distinct type of intervention that characterizes the different polarities. Multilateral anti-revolutionary intervention on the side of the state produced shorter conflicts during multipolarity. Counterinterventions produced much longer conflicts during bipolarity. The effect of transnational political ideology in both periods was to further amplify each period’s effect on duration, and in bipolarity ideology had the additional effect of attracting more frequent interventions. And despite major changes to destructive technology, weapons technology, and global population over the past two hundred years, internal war battle deaths seem to be driven almost exclusively by conflict duration.

Fourth, the seeming explosion in ethnic wars following the end of the Cold War was not due to the unleashing of ethno-religious hatreds that the superpowers had formerly kept bottled up. Rather, the veil of ideology had been dropped—ethnic conflicts that would have been seen as ideological during the Cold War no longer had an ideological interpretation

imposed upon them, nor did post-Cold War factions perceive any benefits from opportunistically claiming ideological affiliation as they might have in the past. The most important story of post-Cold War civil wars is the de-ideologization of global politics, not the rise of ethno-religious conflict.

Fifth, studies of settlement must pay more attention to the structural change of the international system. The major spike in settlements in 1991–1992 following the end of bipolarity is the result of changing system structure, not simply the coincidental solution to fourteen long-running Cold War conflicts. The complete reversal during unipolarity of the ratio of military victories vs. negotiated settlements likewise suggests that structural change entailed a change to the conditions of possibility for conflict settlement. Soviet collapse removed conflict from the core by leaving only one superpower, and that lack of conflict enabled the international institutional order created in 1945 to function as it was originally intended to: as a set of multilateral organizations that could engage in (ostensibly) disinterested conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and mediation.

Finally, my findings reaffirm what should be common sense: civil war is a political phenomenon, and one cannot understand politics *ex* politics. The feasibility hypothesis contends that because political grievances exist everywhere, what matters most in determining when and where a civil conflict is probable are the apolitical factors that make waging a rebellion possible. But the abnormal spike in incidence that begins following World War II and precipitously ends in the same year that the Soviet Union broke apart points toward international politics as the main cause. It remains implausible that commodity exports, lootable resources, topography favoring guerillas, and transnational ethnic links were scarce

during the 1800s and early 1900s, but suddenly became abundant for 40 years, only to rapidly return to scarcity, and that the abnormal pattern of incidence was unrelated to the coterminous global superpower contest.

One cannot understand internal war without politics, and one cannot understand how political grievances are conceived of, articulated, invoked, and acted upon without also understanding the structure of international politics.

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## Scholarly Life

I was born 21 September 1982 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Dana Williams and Burton Jeffrey Williams.

My formal K-8 education began at The Philadelphia School, from 1988–1996. In 1996, I moved to Baltimore and attended the McDonogh School. During high school, I joined the Allan Debating Society, coached by John Hulsman. In 1998, to prepare for the upcoming year's resolution on the topic of U.S.-Russian relations, Dr. Hulsman assigned me Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard*. Reading Dr. Brzezinski's work and debating international relations were responsible for my decision to study international relations.

I attended the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University from 2000–2004. My degree was a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service, with a concentration in International Politics, in the subfield of International Law, Organization, and Ethics, and with a certificate in European Studies, *cum laude*. The attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> occurred during my sophomore year, and the smoke rising from the Pentagon was visible from the roof of my dormitory. I attended the London School of Economics for my 2002–2003 year abroad, a period encompassing the run-up to and principal combat phase of the Iraq War. My senior year, I studied geopolitics and geostrategy under Charles Pirtle, who once again assigned me Dr. Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard*, and whose teaching reoriented me intellectually.

During the 2004 Mahdi Army uprising in Iraq, I worked as an intern at The Cohen Group, a business consultancy led by former Defense Secretary William Cohen, where I prepared a daily report on news in Iraq. Secretary Cohen and former National Security Adviser Sandy Berger were testifying before the 9/11 Commission while I worked there.

Following graduation from Georgetown, and with Professor Pirtle's recommendation, I became the research assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski at the Center for Strategic and International Relations, from 2004–2006. While there I worked on diverse assignments, including: a comparative study of the rise and fall of 14 past empires; a briefing book on Franco-U.S. historical cooperation; a comparison of the civilizational theories of Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, and Samuel Huntington; and, evidence for the 'global political awakening.' I produced a weekly briefing book by reading the news from France, Germany, Ukraine, Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan. I tracked the course of the Orange Revolution. And, I

produced a number of research memoranda for Dr. Brzezinski's book *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, covering significant post-Cold War events in: European integration, Russia, the Middle East, China, India, nuclear proliferation, international institutions, and globalization.

From 2006–2015, and with the recommendation of both Professor Pirtle and Dr. Brzezinski, I worked on my doctoral degree in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Pursuing my major field of international relations and minor field of comparative politics, I studied geopolitics, civil war, nuclear weapons, realism, state theory, nationalism, civil society, and political economy. My advisors were Professor Steven David and Professor Daniel Deudney. I was able to work with the former on his book *Catastrophic Consequences: Civil Wars and American Interests*, and work with the latter on his publications with G. John Ikenberry covering the end of the Cold War nuclear settlement. As a teaching assistant, I led undergraduate discussion sections for Contemporary International Politics, International Politics, Global Security Politics, and Chinese Domestic Politics. I also led graduate student review sessions for Theories of International Politics at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC. As a recipient of the Dean's Teaching Fellowship, I was able to create and sole-teach my own upper-level Geopolitics seminar. My dissertation has focused on the effect of the international balance of power on internal war. My next research project examines the geopolitics of nuclear weapons.

—Thomas Mackin Williams

1 July 2015, Washington, DC